1350 C.1. 1-3.

SOME MISSIVES WRITTEN TO A GENTLEMAN

Which contain the

AUTHOR's AIM,

At *Detecting* and *Refuting* the

DEISM

(As it is called) Or,

Atheism and *Libertinism*

Of our TIME.

EDINBURGH:

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OUR TIME.

45
1670.16.

EDINBURGH:

To the Candid READER,

I *Had no Design to publiſh theſe few Sheets when my poor Thoughts were carried to the Purpoſes contained in them. Neither did I allow my ſelf to think my weak Abilities proportioned to an Interprize of this Nature. Notwithſtanding, as I found my Mind delighted, and ſweetened in writing the ſeveral Miſſives, ſo it was ſurprizing to me to underſtand that they were more acceptable to ſome Perſons of good Note for Learning and Experience, than I could have expected. The Purpoſes are Great and Sweet, and do much want to be better treated: Yet I would fain hope my ſin-*

cere Aim shall be blessed to some: For as much as it pleaseth the Lord to chuse the † weak Things of the World. *This supports me under an afflicting Sense of my Rudeness, both in Speech and Knowledge. The Method wherein the Matter is handled, will be found New, for what I know. I have made all the inquiry I could, and have consulted Persons of Distinction and Learning, who all declared that it is New to them also. Had any of the Judicious, and renowned Patrons of Christianity in Opposition to* Deism, *treated these Matters in the same Order, no Room would have been left for my simple Remarks, seeing, in such an Event, I am persuaded the several Purposes would have been handled so compleatly, that I could not have adventured to glean after so full a Harvest. I pretend not to have managed that Controversy at any Length. Excellent Authors have done that, and written so largely in the Defence of Christianity, that my poor Shreds are not to be compared with their great Performances. It is but one of many Arguments that's treated in the following Missives, and I proceed therein, from that upon which sundry of our Antagonists do value themselves,* viz. *Moral Integrity, and Honesty, unto which the Obligations which ly upon us are universally acknowledged. That this Morality, understood aright, will infer the utter Corruption of Nature, and the necessity of Revelation and Regeneration, I humbly judge, will appear to the honest Reader by the ensuing Letters. I take not*

† 1 Cor. 1. 27.

not upon me to give the Character either of the Matter or Method, and am deeply conſcious to my ſelf that ſuch choice Purpoſes do much deſiderate a more judicious and experienced Author. I ſhall only ſay, that this Method in managing the Argument againſt Deiſts, *is, in my Judgement, much the ſame which our gracious Lord uſeth, for the only effectual defeating this grand Evil, by taking* † *the Vail off from the Heart, and tranſlating the Sinner into a State of Light: And the real truth is, that, until then, we are without God, or Atheiſts (as the Original bears) in the World. That holy, juſt and good Law, which is a Schoolmaſter unto Chriſt (as the Original hath it) is an excellent Hammer for demoliſhing the weak Fabricks of* Deiſm. *It is owing to a debauchedneſs of Conſcience thro' a cuſtom of Vice, and to a detaining* * *the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs, that theſe Matters clear in themſelves, are yet ſo clouded to Wretches drenched and immerſed in known Wickedneſs: Or, to take the Matter by the better Handle, theſe Shades are the reſult of inaccountable Sloath, while Duties abundantly manifeſt, and beyond all debate, are yet neglected. This, I think, is pointed at by what our Lord Jeſus expreſly teacheth us.* My Doctrine *(ſaith he)* is not mine † but his that ſent me. If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf. *I have full Confi-*

† Iſa. 25. 7. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Act. 28. 18. Col. 1. 13. Eph. 2. 12. Gal. 3. 24. * Rom. 1. 13. 32. † Joh. 7. 17.

dence to put the insuing Purposes upon this Issue, and can very resolutely say, That whosever lays to Heart, and is really concerned about practising the incontested Duties mentioned in the Missives, will find, that revealed Religion, and particularly the Revelation of Christ † in the Soul, is absolutely necessary to the Practice: Tho' I proceed upon Reason, in order to what's afterwards observed concerning Revelation, yet I have put some scriptural Places on the Margin, for that it's pleasant to view that Set in a clear Light there by the Spirit of God, at which Nature's Glimmerings obscurely grope. That this Mite may be accepted by the Lord, and blessed to thee, is the Prayer of

Thy sincere Well-wisher.

JA. HOG.

† Gal. 1. 16. Matth. 16. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 21.

I. Letter Introductory.

SIR,

I Remember that when we were communing ſeriouſly about this, and ſome other afflicting Matters in theſe Dregs of Time, wherein the ſovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth hath ordered our Lot: It was mutually regreted by us, hat many of all Ranks and Ages, and eſpe-ially of the younger Sort, have declined to a ind of fluctuating *Scepticiſm*, are unfixed in rinciple, and ready to embrace (if they have not-ctually adopted) the moſt dangerous Notions, ubverſive even of the Foundations of Reli-ion: And more eſpeci lly when theſe ap-lauded Detections are ſet off in ſuch Dreſſes as

are

are fit to recommend them to our vain Minds. It is now become Modish, and is reputed a Gentlemany Part to call in question received Truths, and even such of them as are of the greatest Weight and Influence. The Spirit of God giveth the true Portraiture of such Men, and denounceth just Wrath against them, as Persons contentious †, and who do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness. The chief Source of all this is a sad Defect as to the right Settlement in the Faith *that* * *God is*, and *that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* On this sad occasion, I find Freedom and Inclination (which I hope are of the Lord) to enlarge by sundry Missives that which was more overly touched in our converse about the Matter, and I design to proceed in the following Method. 1. I purpose, after some large Preliminaries, to lay down for a Foundation a few remarkable and incontested *Maxims* of moral Integrity and Honesty. 2. I intend to shew in sundry Particulars the Crossness and Contrariety of our Natures unto these Maxims, while we are in this our corrupted Estate. 3. It will be proper, with some Closeness, to demonstrate, that the forementioned Contrariety is insurmountable, save only through a converting and renewing Work upon the whole Man. 4. This will open the Way to shew clearly

† Rom. 2. 8. Hos. 4. 4. 2 Tim. 3. 8. * Heb. 11. 6. Rom. 14. 23.

clearly that ſuch a Change beareth in its Nature, and hath in-laid with it, the Principles and Myſteries of *revealed Religion*, the only effectual Mean for that End, being a diſplay † of the *Glory of Chriſt* to the Soul.

I greatly honour the elaborate Works of learned Men, wherein they have excellently refuted the rampant Atheiſm of this profane Age, under its various Diſguiſes; and ſhall be loath to enter upon their Labours, my Rudeneſs rendring me utterly unfit to write after ſuch fair Copies. That which I deſign, ſhall be carried no further, ſave to the Reſults of what it pleaſed the Lord to teach me, (may I ſay ſo far) under my own Toſſings about the ſeveral Heads, and therefoe I can have no other Copy in View, ſave the Traces of a Pillar of Cloud, and Fire *, in the merciful Conduct of a poor Weakling, ſome Length through the Wilderneſs; and that I may juſt enter upon the Purpoſe, I incline to offer a few Conſiderations relating to the Moral Law in general, and then to give a ſhort Abſtract of ſome Parts of moral Equity that is diſcovered, and authoritatively enjoined therein. This will lay the broader Foundation to ſome moral Axioms, which are deſtinated to prepare the Way for the chief Subject of theſe Miſſives. And throughout the whole of this, I intend to guard

† 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 5. Mat. 13. 44, 45. Gal. 1. 16. &c.
* Pſal. 119. 105. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Pſal. 19. 7, 8, &c.

guard againſt the unneceſſary repeating of any Thing that may be found to much better Purpoſe in the Works of renowned Authors, who have treated Matters of this Sort

Touching the Moral Law in general, and as the ſame is comprehended ſummarly in the *Ten Commandments* *, or ten *Words*. I know our Deiſts (or Atheiſts) will have little Regard to it, as it is now written, and maketh a Part of the ſacred Canon. I enter not upon the Debate on that Head, for the Time; but aſſuredly Matter of Fact in this Caſe cannot be queſtioned, *viz.* That ſuch a Law there is, ſo much is extant, and under the View of every one. This is all I preſuppoſe in the preſent Matter, and do hereupon aſſert, that this Law known and publiſhed, where ever Chriſtianity is profeſſed, this Law, I ſay, hath ſo many Stamps of its Author imprinted upon it, with ſo much of Reluccence, that it may compete with, yea, and hath a manifold, and clear Brightneſs of Character, that giveth it a Preference to all the Laws which ever were enacted in the World. The Subject here is very large, and therefore I dare not adventure to dip far into it: I only tender a few Particulars to your more ſerious, and deliberate Conſideration. *1ſt*, The whole and every Part of this divine Abſtract is compleatly juſt, and † equal, the Author of it hath ſhewed

* Exod. 20. 1. 2, 3, &c. Mat. 22. 37, 38. Rom. 13. 8, 9, 10. Mat. 19. 18, 19, &c. † Rom. 7. 12.

ſhewed us therein what is * good to the full Compaſs. The beſt of humane Laws, when compared with this, are but mean and empty Inventions: Beſides, that many of theſe have Iniquity mingled in with them, in more, or leſs. It were eaſy to compile a Catalogue of many Inſtances, more than ſufficient, to evince what I have ad anced. But eminent Authors have done th to good Purpoſe, as Occaſions required, and I love not to repeat. Only I remind you, that the politeſt Nations have made, and are daily making Changes in their Laws from Time to Time, and theſe Conſtitutions are altered, and amended in this Event, not only becauſe of Inconveniencies, but alſo from Views of Iniquity, ſometimes inlaid with them. But in the preſent Caſe, which reſpects that perfect, tho' ſhort Syſtem; there is no Occaſion for any, no not the leaſt Alteration, ſeeing theſe holy, juſt, and good Laws do exactly ſuit the circumſtanced Caſes of all Mankind, and of every one of them, all is juſt, and equal here, and the heavenly Equity ſhineth with ſo much of illuſtrious Fulgor, as ſurpaſſeth the Light of Demonſtration.

2*dly*, This holy, juſt, and good Law is admirably full: It is exceedingly † broad, and extenſive, nothing is omitted here that belongs to moral Equity. Take that Equity in its largeſt

* Micah 6. 8. Deut. 10. 12. Eccl. 12. 13, &c. † Pſal. 119. 96. & 19. 7, 8, 9, &c.

largeſt Diffuſion, and it will be found, that all within the Verge thereof, is here compriſed, whether we underſtand it as containing a compleat Syſtem of Virtues, or a full Diſplay of Vices. Hereof I want not to give any other Proof, ſave to make an Appeal to the Conſciences of the moſt perſpicacious *Libertines*, (for howſoever they deery, and banter Conſcience, as if it were a Melancholy, and whimſical Invention, yet it is beyond the Reach of the moſt daring Deſperado's amongſt them, to extinguiſh that * Candle of the Lord) I would make my Appeal, I ſay, to the Conſciences of any, and eſpecially of the more polite amongſt them, and give a Defiance to them all to inſtance a Virtue or Vice that is not contained within theſe *ten Words*. Beſides, that there is a vaſt Deal more comprehended in them, than ever came within the View of the moſt accompliſhed *Moraliſts*, either within, or without the Church, tho' yet the little Scraps of that Sort the Heathens underſtood, were rather owing to Tradition from the true Church, than the Fruit of their Diligence.

3*dly*, If hereunto we add the divine and inimitable Brevity, yet mingled with aſtoniſhing Clearneſs, whereby theſe *ten Words* are eminently ſignalized beyond all the Products of the moſt renowned Legiſlators. Who can poſſibly eſcape

* Prov. 20. 27.

eſcape the Conviction that God only is the *Law-giver* here, unleſs he ſhakes off all Temper, and Sobriety, and preſume to deny what hath a greater Brightneſs of Evidence, than if it were written with the Beams of the Sun.

4thly, The nervous, and powerful Force, and Efficacy of Expreſſion hath ſo much of excellent Beauty, and divine Majeſty inlaid therewith, as, with its other Properties, gives me ground to think, that a Declaration of the Matter, even to a ſober, and unprejudiced Heathen, would through the divine Bleſſing, find an eaſy Perſwaſion that God himſelf either ſpake, or ſome one or another Way is the Author of theſe Words, in regard both Matter and Expreſſion have ſo many Impreſſes of Divine Authority upon them, as do fully evince their being the Product of infinite Wiſdom. So much then we have gained, namely, that the aſtoniſhing Fulneſs, Perſpicuity, admirable Conciſeneſs, with a divine Emphaſis and Power of Expreſſion, do each of them ſeverally, and yet much more do they all when put together, proclaim the Glories of the Author. I eſſay not to give any further Proof of that which I have advanced, in regard the Matter is plain in it ſelf, and I cannot offer any Thing that's beyond its innate Relucence, we cannot well give a ſatisfying Definition of Light, and ſcarcely can we carry our Accounts the Length of any tolerable Deſcription thereof; and yet this

this is ſo far from being owing to any Obſcurity in the Thing, that upon the contrary, it is the Reſult of a ſhining Evidence, which ſurmounteth Words. Nevertheleſs, it is not poſſible to perceive that Evidence without Eyes. The ſame Thing holds here; and therefore I ſhall uſe no more Words about it, but do only lay this down as a Principle, and the Ground-Work of the following Superſtructure, *viz. The Moral Law is from the Lord.* You may expect further Accounts in following Miſſives. I remain, *&c.*

LETTER II.

Wherein Touches are given at ſome Heads, all plain in this Moral Law, *which being inlarged and improven, would amount to a Syſtem of inconteſted Morality; and ſome Duties are ſpecified, which we owe to the Law-giver himſelf.*

SIR,

IN my laſt I mentioned a few Properties of the *Moral Law* in general, which give clear and ſweet Indications of its glorious Author. I deſign by this to give you ſome little Glances at the Contents of the Law it ſelf. I know that Accounts of this Nature have been given by eminent Divines, who were honoured to do great Services to the Churches of Chriſt, by

y their notable Commentaries upon, and Ex-
ositions of this Law. I enter not upon their
Work, but do only design to hint at a few Ge-
erals, all founded on *Reason*, howsoever weak
nd imperfect in us. Somewhat of this Kind I
annot omit so much being necessary to lay a
Foundation for the *Moral Axioms*, upon which I
roject to build the following Purposes.

1*st*, More generally I observe, That in re-
ard the Law is so very full, as was already
hen tioned, and seeing Man being a Creature
ndowed with Reason, is capable of rational
Conformity unto a Law and Rule: It is mani-
est beyond controul, that this Conformity
ught to be compleat †, it should reach and be
xtended throughout the whole Man *, our
Souls and Bodies, with all the Faculties and
Powers of the same, are required to be blame-
ess, having that Stamp of Purity upon them,
which is suitable unto this perfect Rule. It
annot be called in question, but that a reason-
ble Nature is capable of moral Beauty and
Purity, and therefore the Obligation of all
easonable Creatures thereunto, and to the Perfe-
tion thereof, is plain, and beyond all Exception.
And for as much as the † Compleatness, and
Contents of the Law, bear its Extension to
our Natures, and way, our Thoughts, Words
nd Deeds in their whole Compass; it clearly
fol-

† Mat. 5. 48. * 1 Thes. 5. 22. 23. † Psal. 119. 96.
& 19. 7, 8, 9.

that in all theſe we ought to be conformable to it.

2. Preſuppoſing that we are thereby required to have a juſt Conſideration of, and Deference unto the God of Glory, our only Law-giver: As alſo, that we are therein enjoined to be under a ſuitable Concernment about our ſelves, and our fellow Subjects under this glorious Lord and Legiſlator; it is manifeſt from the Tenor and Perfection of this Law, that we are therein taught and enjoined the juſt and equal Meaſures of Behaviour that's due in all the forementioned Regards; and therefore I deſign to point at ſome few Things, with Reference to each of them, referring you for larger Accounts unto ſuch Authors as have treated Purpoſes of this Sort particularly and expreſly. And firſt, as to the *Lawgiver*, the following Claſſes of Duties are plain, and beyond Controverſy.

1. It is evident from the *Firſt Command*, That all * Honour and Homage becoming God's glorious Excellencies, are due unto him from rational Creatures, made by their Lord and Creator, with a Capacity to know and acknowledge him. He is God, the alone independent, and ſelf-ſufficient Being; and every Creature hath as much of Dependence upon him, as it hath of Being: Hence, foraſmuch as rational Creatures depend upon him in a rati-

* Pſal. 29. 1, 2. Jer. 10. 6. Exod. 15. 11.

tional Way, ſuiting their rational Being; ey ought, as ſuch, or in that Capacity, to knowledge this Dependence in every Act of orſhip and Obedience that cometh within e Verge of the perfect Rule.

2. It is no leſs highly reaſonable, and re- ired *Command Second*, That the Homage, orſhip, and Service due to our ſovereign ord, ſhall be wholly under the Rules * which hath preſcribed. They amongſt Men, who e dignified with Sovereignty, do all chal- nge a Right in this Matter: And the *Law of ations* provides, That the Homage, Defe- nce, and Obedience which are given to ings, ſhall not depend upon the Diſpoſal and rbitrement of their Subjects; ſuch Acknow- dgments are brought under a higher and au- oritative Regulation, by theſe in whom So- reignty is lodged, according to the Nature d Limits of the ſeveral Civil Governments. nd forasmuch as this is reckoned amongſt the *egalia*, with the Princes and Potentates of e Earth; the Purity of Reaſon demandeth, hat the *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, the *rince of the Kings of the Earth*, be acknow- dged and honoured, as having the intire and le Diſpoſal of his own Worſhip, in all the rts and Pertinents of the ſame, as alſo of the bedience that is due unto him, in the whole

* Iſa. 29. 13. Mat. 15. 9. Col. 2. 23.

Extenſion thereof. No Creature hath a Right to make Appointments in theſe Matters: And, if they pretend to a Power of th Kind, it muſt needs be by *Delegation*; which Caſe, it is the Right of every one, a a Part of the Honour they owe to the God Glory, to require their *Credentials*. Othe wiſe, a ſubmitting our Necks, yea, and o Souls to human Yokes, as to Worſhip, or a Part of Obedience, is a moſt unreaſonab Servitude. It is memorable, that a Heathen Monarch expreſſed a juſt Concernment abo this weighty Buſineſs, when he gave Ord That *whatſoever* * *was commanded by the God Heaven, ſhould be done in his Houſe.* There is Place then for making new Laws about the Matters, unleſs we advance a Poſition whi highly reflects upon the Honour of our alo Lord, and Lawgiver; namely, That the Things are not ſufficiently provided for, by own Laws and Inſtitutions: For, if they (and it would border upon Blaſphemy, to ledge they are not) there is no Room left Conſtitutions, not founded upon the perf Rule.

3. It is highly reaſonable, plainly requir *Command Third*, and Reaſon it ſelf (howſoev weak and imperfect in our preſent State) do alſo challenge it as an inconteſted Right of Deit

* Ezr. 7. 23.

eity, That in all our Acknowledgments of
m, and Concernments about every Thing
hereby he is pleaſed to make himſelf known,
ur Souls ſhould be impreſſed with profound
Reverence, from ſome juſt Senſe of his glo-
ous Majeſty; and in particular, That all our
ndeavours at Obedience to his Will, be inlaid
ith the deepeſt Veneration. This the very
lotion of a Deity demands; Him we ought
ſee in all Things, and to point towards him
the great and ultimate End † in every
hing: Foraſmuch as it belongs to him to be
ur *Omega* and laſt End, upon the very ſame
rounds that inſtruct his being our *Alpha*, the
uthor of what we are, and who hath us en-
rely under the Care of his Providence. Thus
ſet him continually * *before our Eyes*, to live
nd breathe ſtill in the Fear of his Name, is a
ife truly rational.

4. In like Manner, Reaſon alſo ſaith what's
equired *Command Fourth*, That the God of
ur Being, unto whom we owe our Life, Breath,
nd all Things, ought to be acknowledged and
dored, not only in more ſecret and retired
Ways, but alſo by † *Societies* and Communities,
ith all poſſible Solemnity. Every Perſon, and
ach Society, of whatſoever Kind, hath as
uch of Dependence upon the *God of the Spirits*

* Job 28. 28. Pſ. 111. 10. Eccl. 12. 13. Pſal. 89. 7.
Pſ. 27. 4. & 73. 24. Rom. 11. 36. Rev. 1. 8. * Pſ.
16. 8. † Pſ. 100. 1, 2, 3, 4. Heb. 12. 22, 23.

of all Fleſh, as it hath of Being: or (whi
amounts to one) is in every Thing depende
upon our ſovereign Lord: And that this D
pendence ſhould be acknowledged in the mo
ſolemn Ways, is capable of a manifold D
monſtration, even from the Glimmerings
Nature, were it neceſſary to enlarge upon
Head ſo very plain. It were a heavy Imp
tation upon the Reaſon of any ſober Perſo
ſhould I think that he wanted to have a Poſ
tion proven to him, which no Man can den
unleſs his Conſcience were debauched to ſuc
a high Pitch of enormous Wickedneſs, as t
procure his out-facing, and daring God himſe
the God, and ſovereign Lord of Men, i
every Capacity, and of all Societies. I ſha
only take the Freedom to deduce a Corrolar
or two from the preceeding Aſſertions, bot
becauſe the Import of the Matter requireth
and the Evidence thereof pointeth at them
beſides that they are of a neceſſary Conſidera
tion, with Reſpect to ſome circumſtanced Caſe
in our Day.

Corrolary 1. It appeareth hence, that the
Worſhip of God in Families, * is a Part o
theſe Acknowledgments which are due to our
Sovereign Lord, in Regard every Society, a
ſuch, hath as much of Dependence on him,
as it poſſeſſeth of Being; and is, as to this

De-

* Joſ. 24. 15. Pſal. 101. 1, 2. Jer. 10. 25.

pendence, upon the ſame Level with private rſons, and bound, upon the very ſame ounds, to acknowledge that Dependence in orſhip and Obedience, ſuitably to its Cir-mſtances. The Proportion holds, as any dicious Perſon may eaſily ſee: And hence the orſhip of the Lord in a Family Relation, th a clear Foundation in theſe Notices of a eity, which even Nature's Glimmerings do ggeſt. Neither were the Heathens them-ves Strangers to ſo much, as appears by the olatry of their *Penates*, or Houſhold Gods: me Notices of this Kind were at Bottom th them, tho' dreadfully corrupted, as other hings were.

Corrolary 2. As Reaſon it ſelf would ſay, at it is moſt becoming for the Heads of the pective Families to perform the ſeveral Parts Worſhip competent to them, (foraſmuch as eir Relation to the Family bears Authority, d demands a repreſenting the Family there-) ſo the juſt Notions of a Deity, will clear-evince, that it is far from carrying any Diſ-ragement, but is upon the contrary truly nourable for the † greateſt amongſt Men to about ſuch ſocial Duties. Near Admiſſion crowned Heads is generally much valued, d the Perſons are thought highly privileged o have acceſs unto them, and occaſions to al with them, whether for themſelves, and

† 2 Sam. 6. 20. Pſ. 138. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

yet more, in ſo far as they repreſent other
It's reputed a great Honour unto any ſo
ſovereign Princes to ſpeak unto them, and t
allow them acceſs to utter their Minds unt
Princes; hence the Conſequence is plain an
eaſy, *viz.* That a Preſidency in ſolemn an
ſocial Worſhip, as Perſons are called, and ha
acceſs thereunto, is a moſt honourable Wor
Hereupon I cannot eſcape to infer with ſom
ſuitable Commotion in my own Mind, that
deſpiſing ſuch Exerciſes as unworthy of, an
below Perſons even of no great Note, reflec
eth deeply upon the true God whom we pr
tend to Worſhip, and I tremble to mentio
from what Sources the contemptuous vilif
ing of them muſt neceſſarily proceed.

Corrolary 3. Tho'. I dare not adventure t
ſay, That Nature's glimmerings detect th
Proportion of Time, which is to be regular
conſecrated unto the Lord, and employed ſ
lemnly and intirely in the Duties of his Wo
ſhip, namely a ſeventh Part of the Wee
whether the laſt or firſt Day thereof, tho'
dare not ſay, that Nature's Light can poſſib
determine this, in its preſent corrupt Eſtat
whatever it might have reached to, if it h
remained intire: Yet I can take upon me
aſſert, That the Proportion being now r
vealed, appeareth manifeſtly to be moſt equ
But waving in this Abſtract every Thing th
may be reputed Matter of doubtful Diſput
tio

ion, I only represent it as most reasonable, nd clearly deducible from Nature's Light, specially at the Advantages of its Improvement by Revelation, namely that Worship whether *Secret*, *Social*, or more *Publick* and *olemn*, ought necessarly to have its set Times. The Nature of Man is now become most irregular, and therefore that which hath no certain Time assigned to it, cannot readily fail o be neglected. Whatsoever Time then our overeign Lord hath set apart for his Worship, nust needs be observed punctually. So much y way of *Corrolary*. I return now to the ain Purpose, and represent

5. That the summ of this Part of the *Moral aw*, as declared in the Scriptures, is clearly ounded on Reason, *viz.* We are obliged to ove the Lord *with all our Hearts, with all our oul, and with all our Strength.* What we are, nd have, Life, Breath, and all Things we we wholly unto him; and seeing he is the God of Glory independent, and infinitely Perect, infinite Honour and Homage would be ue unto him, were it possible for finite Creatures to pay that Regard: But forasmuch as heir finite Natures cannot allow such a Defence, assuredly the most complete that Creatures can be capable of belongs unto him: Let his suffice for a glance at some Generals with elation unto what we owe in point of Duty o our sovereign Lord. The next shall account

count for the Duties we owe unto God, with reference unto our own Perſons, and to our Neighbours. I remain, *&c.*

LETTER III.

Which containeth Regulations founded on Reaſon, with Reſpect to our ſelves and our Neighbours, ſuiting the ſecond Table of the Law.

SIR,

PLeaſe without any preamble to take my poor Thoughts about this Matter in the following Poſitions.

1. *Man is not his own.* All he hath of Being, the Advantages he enjoyeth of any Sort, and the Qualities he is endowed with, whatſoever theſe be, he holdeth them all of his Lord, and oweth them intirely unto him. We can claim nothing as ours ſave the Sinfulneſs, Deficience, and Deordination of our Natures. It was often obſerved before, that every Creature hath as much of Dependence upon its Creator and ſovereign Lord, as it hath of Being, or (which is the ſame) dependeth upon him in every thing, † *of this God, and through him, and to him are all Things.* To this, right Reaſon giveth its Suffrage. Hence

2. Crea-

† Rom. 11. 36. Act. 17. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, &c.

2. Creatures endowed with Reaſon, and who alſo have othewiſe their *All* from their Creator, and the Author of their Being; ſuch Creatures I ſay, are plainly obliged to acknowledge ſo much, and ſeeing they are not their † own, they may not without the moſt ſacrilegious Preſumption arrogate unto themſelves the diſpoſal of themſelves, and of any thing that is given them by their bountiful Lord. Even common Senſe ſaith, That no Perſon can have Right to diſpoſe according to his own pleaſure, of that which is not his. What we are and have is intirely the Lords, and we owe it wholly to him, therefore the very glimmerings of Nature would ſay, that it ſhould be uſed, and improven for him.

3. Our Creator and ſovereign Lord, who hath given us a Being, and a Nature more excellent than that of the other ſublunary Creatures: That God, I ſay, who hath ſo far honoured us, doth thereby undoubtedly require, that not only the ultimate, but likewiſe all ſubordinate Ends we propoſe to our ſelves, ſhould be anſwerable to the Dignity of our Natures, as the God of Glory did at firſt conſtitute them. Aſſuredly it is for no mean Work that the Lord did make Man wiſer than the Beaſts of the Earth, and the Fowls of Heaven. And therefore,

4. I

† Pſal. 100. 3.

4. I obſerve with ſome more of cloſeneſs to the Purpoſe under preſent View, That foraſmuch as our Deportment, with Reſpect to our ſelves and others, ſhould be ordered in every thing according to Rule, becauſe we are not our own, but do belong intirely to our Lord and Maker; it is then manifeſt beyond all poſſibility of Controul, that we are indiſpenſibly obliged to advert unto, and obſerve the Regulations our ſovereign Lord hath preſcribed to us in all theſe Reſpects. The Purpoſe here is large, but I ſhall condeſcend only upon a few of many Particulars, and all of them clearly founded upon Reaſon.

Firſt, It is plain in Fact, clear from *Command* 5th, and denyed by no body, That every one of the Children of Men is placed by our ſovereign Lord, in ſome one Relation or another, or in more than one towards his Neighbour. We are according to our ſeveral Stations, either *Superiors*, *Inferiors*, or upon an *Equality* of Level with our Neighbours. Hence, as the ten Words, to which theſe Notes relate, do contain a complete Account of the whole Concernements of theſe † Relations, with the ſeveral Sins and Duties that reſpect the ſame, ſo I would only repreſent it as a clearly rational and inconteſted Truth, that we are obliged by the great and only Law-giver to demean our ſelves according unto the Exigences

† 1 Pet. 2. 7. Rom. 12. 10. Eph. 5. 21.

gences of these Relations, as it hath pleased him to declare the same. It is not my Business to enter upon a Detail of them, they shine with an astonishing Brightness of Lustre, as contained in, and held forth from this perfect Law. Allow me only to represent a Remark or two which do both pertain to this Head, and are also of a larger Extent and Improvement. 1. It would be the Happiness, as much as it is the Duty of Mankind, exactly to keep Rank, and faithfully to acquit themselves in a diligent and close Performance of the plain and incontroverted Duties which manifestly pertain to these Relations, and sundry whereof belong to their very Essence. It wants not to be demonstrated, being Matter of Fact, which no sober Person will, or can deny, *viz.* That our Ruins, with respect to Societies of whatsoever Kind, do issue from Disturbances and Violations of the comely Order, which our sovereign Lord hath set and enjoined to be observed amongst Men; and particularly with Reference to our divers Stations, and the Relations wherein we severally stand towards one another. It is evident that the Ruins of particular Persons, Families, Incorporations, States and Nations, and in a Word, of all Societies, do chiefly proceed from a breaking of this beautiful Order: Whereas, were it punctually observed (even in so far

as is manifeſt by Nature's Light) theſe Places which now are worſe than a confuſed Chaos, would upon the contrary be found like an earthly Paradiſe. 2. I muſt obſerve, That it were the Intereſt, as well as it is the Duty of Mankind, and particularly of thoſe who are in Authority amongſt them, to lay out themſelves all they can for ſuppreſſing *Atheiſm* and *Libertiniſm*, foraſmuch as the abetters of ſuch Abominations decry, and preſume to deny the divine Obligations which ly upon us to lay to Heart the Duties of theſe Relations. They may be juſtly reckoned (as to the Tendency of the Thing) Murderers of the whole Race of Mankind, who take off the Juſt, and effectual Bar againſt the Violations of this Order, namely a ſubmiſſive and intire Reſpect unto the Laws and Conſtitutions of our ſovereign Lord, and the righteous Judge of all the Earth, and who allow no higher Regard unto that comely Order he hath ſet, than what proceeds from the Love a Perſon will have to his own Safety, becauſe the groſs Tranſgreſſions thereof might bring them to condign Puniſhment, and ſomewhat of Dutifulneſs, with Reſpect thereunto procureth Advantages to him. The manifeſt Language of ſuch deteſtable Sentiments (which yet are inſinuated as the Product of Wit) is plainly this, That in caſe a Perſon attain ſome Elevation † amongſt

† Exod. 5. 2.

amongſt Men, and do think himſelf out of their Reach, he may freely do all the Miſchief he can poſſibly deviſe, eſpecially if he have the Proſpects of Advantage thereby. *3dly*, As it is preſumable, That in a ſober and ſedate Exerciſe of our intellectual Faculties, we may know that which is due unto us from our Neighbour, according unto our Stations, and the Relations wherein the Lord hath placed us; ſo Reaſon it ſelf plainly ſaith, That we owe the like Conſideration to our Neighbour, and are in the ſame Manner bound unto a becoming and dutiful Behaviour towards them. So much for this firſt Particular, with the Corollaries from it.

2dly, Our Lives, whether *animal* or *rational*, are not our own, they belong intirely to our Lord, the Author of our Being, who hath given us Life, Breath, and all Things, and unto whom we owe our Preſervation, Suſtenance, and all the Advantages of Life, in whatſoever Kind, natural Light ſaith, and ſome Heathens have obſerved, That we are all his *Offspring*; aſſuredly in him *we live* †, *move, and have our Being*. From this I infer, that all that pertaineth to the Preſervation * and Improvement of Life, whether as to quiet and ſedate Temper of Mind, and a well regulated Uſe of the

† Acts 17. from 24. and forward. * 1 Kings 18. 4. Jer. 26. 15, 16. Acts 23. 12.——16. 17.——21. 27. 2 Sam. 2. 22. Deut. 22. 8. Eph. 4. 26. 27, &c. &c.

the Means of Life, together with a profitable Exercise of the Faculties of the Soul, and the Members of the Body, &c. whatsoever, I say, is within the Compass of these, and the like Heads, belongeth certainly to this perfect Law, and Rule; all which are so manifest, that Nature it self proclaims, and a Conscience not debauched, must needs acknowledge the Obligation. I enlarge not further upon this Purpose, but shall only represent in a Word, that the Obligation we are under towards our Neighbour, is of the same Sort; and therefore we ought to have the like tender Regard unto the Lives of others, and unto all that belongs unto these Lives, and may be beneficial, or hurtful unto them, of which we ought to have such a Consideration, and are obliged to such a Concernment about them in our Neighbour's Case as we would think just and proper to be had in our own. This, and more appears from *Command* 6th.

3*dly*, This Law comprised in ten Words beareth; the *seventh Command* affecteth, and Reason giveth its Suffrage to that Chastity † and Purity in Body, Mind, Affections, Speech, Gesture, and Behaviour, which is generally professed amongst the better, and more modest Sort of People; and that every Lust, together with th

† 1 Cor. 7. 2, 3, 4, 5, 34. 36. 1 Pet. 3. 2. Col. 4. 6. 1 Thes. 4. 4. Job 31. 1. Prov. 2. 16, 17, 18, &c. and 5. 19, 20, &c.

he leaſt Inclinations, or Stirings in Thought, Word, or Deportment, which are contrary hereunto, ought to be had in a juſt Deteſtation. The ſame Rule with the Grounds and Reaſons thereupon founded, do equally hold, with Reſpect to our Neighbour: And hence we ought to have the like Regard towards the Preſervation and promoting of the fore-mentioned Purity and Chaſtity in others, which we ſhould deſire, and endeavour to attain in our own Perſons. Our Deiſts, I know, do rage, ridicule, and banter this, as if Luſt belonged to our very Conſtitution, I only ſay to them for the Time, that Luſt in the moſt groſs Acts, and the Motions towards them, are of the ſame Kind, as a Drop is homogeneous to the Ocean. *4thly*, The worſt of them would be ſenſible of Injuries done to themſelves in this Kind, and here they owe the ſame Conſideration to their Neighbour.

4thly, Preſuppoſing *Property* amongſt Men, which I preſume none of our Deiſts will deny; I may aſſume it as abundantly manifeſt in Reaſon, as well as required in this perfect Law, *Command* viii. That Equity and Mercy ſhould be diligently ſought, carefully looked to, and obſerved punctually in all our Buſineſs. In all theſe Regards, our Affairs, as to † *Contracts*

† Pſal. 15. 2. Zech. 7. 9, 10. & 8. 16, 17. Rom. 13. 8. Lev. 6. 2, 3, 4, 5. Luke 19. 8. & 6. 30, 38. 1 Tim. 5. 8. Prov. 27. from 23, &c. &c.

tracts and *Commerce*, or whatsoever else falleth to be done betwixt Man and Man, ought to be exactly adjusted to the Exigencies of Equity, Mercy, and a truly rational and noble Generosity, which every one would desire to be used towards themselves in the several Exigences which require the same. Moreover, I need not instruct the particular and clear Obligations which ly upon us to a provident Care and Concernment about secular Goods, namely to purchase, keep, use, and to dispose of these Things which belong to the Sustentation of Nature, and the Conveniencies of Life, in such a Manner as may afford Peace in our Consciences, being free from extremes on either Hand. Allow me only to subjoin, That as we are required to endeavour a procuring and furthering *our own Wealth and outward Estate by all just and lawful Means*, so we ought to carry the like Affection, and to express in all possible and proper Ways the like tender Care *towards our Neighbour, and all that is his.*

5. Of the same Evidence, and Strength is our Obligation from *Command* ix. unto whatsoever comes within the Compass of that excellent Virtue of *Veracity.* The Obligation that lyeth upon us to speak the † Truth in

† Zech. 8. 16. Ps. 15. 2. Lev. 19. 15. Prov. 14. 5. 25. 2 Cor. 1. 17, 18. Eph. 4. 25. 1 Sam. 22. 14. Prov. 24. 24. 25. Ps. 101. 5. Prov. 22. 1. Ps. 15. 4. Phil. 4. 8. Lev. 19. 15. Hab. 1. 4. Prov. 6. 16. 19. & 19. 5. Act. 13. &c. &c.

from our Hearts, is plain, and indiſput-
e. Nevertheleſs, Reaſon ſaith, That all
s muſt be managed and tempered with Chri-
n Prudence, as Caſes diverſly circumſtanced
der adviſable. All Truths are not to be
cloſed, for he is a Fool who uttereth all his
nd. It is a reaſonable Part to obſerve
efully, what the ſeveral Occaſions require,
the Circumſtances of Things, and Perſons
bear. Every one would demand that, as
ght in his own Caſe, and ſure he oweth ſo
ch to his Neighbour. Nevertheleſs no un-
h ought to be ſpoken upon any pretext
atſoever; and moreover, Truth muſt be
ſerved and promoted betwixt Man and
n in all the Affairs of Life. But in a pe-
ar manner this ought to be adverted unto,
en we are regularly called to *Witneſs-bear-*
Admit once that Truth may be encroach-
upon, ſpecious Pretences will never be want-
, and allow it in *Witneſs-bearing* no Man is
ceforth ſure of Life, or any Thing. All is
he Mercy of the worſt of Men: No So-
y can ſtand without this Veracity; and for
uch as a perſons Credit and Reputation in
World is of great Import in all the Con-
ments of Life, it is no leſs manifeſt that
ought to have a ſpecial Regard thereunto,
ſhould be very tender of our own good
me, and in the ſame manner, of that of

our Neighbour with the like Affection, as it were our own.

Finally, 6. This ſuccinct and moral R bears, the *Tenth Command* requires, as a Reaſon and Conſcience (if not utterly debauc ed) will add their Suffrage, that we are und the ſtrongeſt Obligations to be well † ſatisfi with the Condition our ſovereign Lord ha ordered for us in the World, whatſoever may be, and that it is moſt Iniquous in any be diſpleaſed with the better Eſtates of Neighbour, and to bear the leaſt ſecret Grud againſt him upon any pretext whatſoever. have inſiſted perhaps too long upon a pl Purpoſe, and it was not without inw ſtruggling that I preſumed upon your Patie in glancing at theſe Generals. My Deſign a great part, was to ſhew how eaſy it w for a judicious Perſon under divine Condu to raiſe a choice Syſtem of Morals on th Grounds, and of ſuch Evidence, that n could offer any Contradiction thereunto, wi out doing the utmoſt Violence to Reaſon ſelf. I alſo thought ſo much not improper introducing the *Moral Axioms*, upon wh the chief Purpoſes I have in View, are deſig to be founded, and to which I proceed in following Miſſives, I remain, *&c.*

LE

† Heb. 13. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 6. Job 31. 29. Rom. 12 Eſt. 5. 13. Gal. 5. 26. Ja. 3. 14. 16. &c. Pſ. 112. 9 Neh. 2. 10. Rom. 7. 7, 8, &c.

LETTER IV.

Containing Moral Axioms.

SIR,

I Think not that any judicious, ſober, and honeſt Perſon, would look upon it as a Stretch, ſhould I reckon the Poſitions of e former Miſſives, at leaſt the moſt of them, be *Moral Axioms*: Neither do I expect that y whoſe Conſciences are not much violated, d extinguiſhed, would move any Debate a- ut them. Nevertheleſs I incline not to go Work ſo very largely, but do rather chuſe raiſe the Superſtructure intended, upon a re cloſe and near Foundation: And there- e I ſhall make choice of a few, and do rpoſe deliberately to pretermit ſundry o- rs. The following occur to me; and as I ubt not but others of equal Weight and E- ence may be in your View, ſo I ſhall be y glad to be your Scholar in ſuch a delici- s, weighty and uſeful Matter. Pleaſe in mean while to take my little Mite.

Axiom 1. *Whatever* * *we have juſt cauſe to k, that others ſhould do to us, we are obliged eal in the ſame manner with them.* It is true, *Atheiſts* and *Libertines* of the Age will have

* Mat. 7. 12.

no regard to this as part of the ſacred Canon; yet the Thing is full of Evidence in its Nature, and was in ſuch Repute amongſt the moſt refined and famous Heathens, that no Man can deny, but that it challengeth the greateſt Conſideration from its own intrinſick Truth, Value and Evidence. It wants not to be inſtructed, ſeeing it is a *Maxim* or firſt *Principle*, and to be ſure, a notable Expedient for Safety amongſt Mankind, which every one will deſire. Notwithſtanding I think it proper to offer a few Remarks for its further Illuſtration. 1. It is not to be doubted, but that in our Concerns, we may in the Uſe of ordinary Means eaſily know what's within the Limits of Equity † and Mercy, and how far the Obligations unto the one and other ought to be extended in our circumſtanced Caſe. And in the Event of our erring, (for we are not infallible any way) it is fairly preſumable, the Error will ſway towards the more favourable Side in that which relateth to our ſelves. Howſoever, I may juſtly aſſert that *Right* and *Wrong*, in moſt of the Concerns of Life, are not ſo clouded, but that they may be diſcerned, and the Marches may be conveniently run betwixt the one and other; ſo that any Perſon of ordinary Capacity, ſhall in the Uſe of Means be brought to a ſatisfying Point about them without much Difficulty. And tho' in ſome Ca-

† Mic. 6. 8. Ja. 1. 27.

aſes, the Strait were not eaſily extricable; t, as ſuch are rare, ſo the juſt meaſures of onduct depend not much upon them. 2. Whatſoever we juſtly think is due unto us by y, upon whatſoever account, whether of ore ſtrict Juſtice, Mercy, Generoſity, or in y other valuable Regard, we have the like auſes to conclude that the very ſame Things, e upon the ſame Grounds, equally due by us to others, in whatever Relation we ſtand, may be brought into, towards them, and hereinſoever we have acceſs to deal with em in the Buſineſs of Life. 3. Hence it is aniſeſt, that in our whole Conduct, and e- ry part of our Management amongſt Men, ought to have a clear Conſcience that we eaſure nothing to them but what we ſincere- and as before God, do think ſhould, and uld accordingly deſire to be meaſured out to ſelves. In one Word, I take the Senſe of *Axiom* to amount unto this, namely we ght to put our Neighbours, juſt in our own ee, and to conſider them, as if they were our es, and in all our Dealings about them, to t them as we have juſt Ground to deſire t we our ſelves may be treated. Here's a r Rule of Equity, Mercy, Generoſity, and y Thing valuable in Morals, a Maxim ſo ly rational, that it cannot be diſputed nor yed, unleſs we abandon Reaſon it ſelf. yet any Perſon may ſee how great a Com-

pend of Business it would happily make, and what a vast Number of Debates might be issued by a due adverting thereunto. I need not remind you, how that almost all the Contests which have place amongst Men, and do fill the World with so much Injustice, Cruelty, Oppression, Confusion, Wars, Tumults, and every evil Thing, do clearly proceed from a regardlessness of, and Opposition unto this plain *Axiom*.

Axiom 2d, *The Measure of Duty we owe, whether more immediately unto God, or to Men by his Command, is that Declaration of Right our sovereign Lord, the only Law-giver, hath given; and which he hath injoined by the Word.* * Which Will is also interwoven with the very Make, and Nature of Things, as any judicious Observer may see, who shall determine Right and Wrong, save only, the God who is the Author of our Being, and who hath made us reasonable Creatures. Assuredly we depend upon him in every Thing, and are under indispensible Obligations to be intirely subject unto him in all that we are, and have in every Station, and in all the Relations wherein we stand. So much then I may safely assume: Nevertheless for a further Illustration of the Matter, I subjoin the following *Corollaries*. 1*st*, We are not then to be determined

* Exod. 20. 1, 2, 3. Mat. 22. 37. Rom. 13. 9. Mat. 19. 18, 19.

bout Right, or Wrong, by the Proſpects we
iſe concerning future Events, whether they
re like to prove favourable, or adverſe. I con-
ſs, theſe Practices are ready to have the As-
ndant over us, which allure, by promiſing the
dvantages we chiefly value. In ſuch Events
ur Underſtandings are very obnoxious to be
mpoſed upon, and from this Source it proceeds,
hat the juſt Boundaries betwixt Right and
Vrong, whether as to Sentiment, or Practice,
re not duely adverted unto, when theſe Con-
derations which belong not to the Cauſe, do
otwithſtanding bear the greateſt Sway with
s. And as the Probability of Emoluments
arrieth us eaſily to the wrong Side, by flatter-
g Inſinuations, ſo the fears of Trouble pre-
oſſeſſing the Mind, have the like Effect and
nfluence, through an Exceſs of Determent. But
l this is contrary to Reaſon, foraſmuch as the
eclared Will of our ſovereign Lord ſhewing us
ood and *Evil*, enjoining the one, and forbid-
ing the other; the Will, I ſay, of our ſove-
eign Lord is the only true Meaſure of *Sin* and
Duty. I freely acknowledge that we ought to
ave a due Regard to, and Conſideration of
he Probability of Events, in whatſoever Kind,
his belongeth to, and becometh rational Crea-
ures: Neither is it to be doubted, but that
ch Proſpects are capable of a manifold Im-
rovement. Nevertheleſs, they are not the
tandarts of Sin and Duty, nor can it conſiſt

with

with right Reaſon that we take our Meaſure as to theſe weighty Matters, from ſuch Pro pects. Hence 1. Theſe Setts of Politicks whic generally have a great Vogue in the World, a both irreligious and contrary to Reaſon: F ſuch Politicians (as to the greater Part) ha little if any Concern about the Limits, whic our ſovereign Lord has ſet betwixt Right an Wrong, but do generally puſh the En which they propoſe to themſelves by an Means they think feaſible, without bringi the one or other to the Rule and Touch-ſton and ſo ſtrong is the Current this way, that th are generally reputed the wiſeſt Men who wo out their Deſigns, tho' at the ſad Rate much unaccountable Iniquity.

Corrolary. 2. Foraſmuch as the Will of t Law-giver ſtates our Duty, and that it is n to be determined by extrinſical Conſideratio how weighty or valuable ſoever we may thi them to be, or under whatſoever Dreſs th may either allure, or deter us; it plainly fo loweth, that how undutiful, and unbecomi ſoever our Neighbour's Deportment towar us may be, tho' he ſhould intirely neglect h Duty, and go croſs to it in every Thing, y whatſoever the Law hath ſtated as our Du to him, remaineth, as to the whole Compa ſtill of the ſame obligatory Nature. For t Rule runs not thus, *Whatever Men do to y do ye that to them*; but, *Whatſoever ye wo*

hat Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: And every Body knows, that none would deſire any Hurt to be done to them. Nothing can be excepted againſt this, unleſs it be inſtructed, that in caſe of theſe Injuries, our Obligation ceaſeth; which, I think, not any ſober Perſon will aſſert. And ſeeing his injurious Behaviour againſt us, is ſinful on his Part, the like Returns from us, cannot be free of Sin. In this Caſe, Sin is fertile, and the Commiſſion thereof by him, brings forth the like, and often a more plentiful Brood in us. Reaſon, if not byaſſed, would ſay, That the Wickedneſs of our Neighbour, in the fore-mentioned Regards, renders him an Object of Compaſſion, but not of Revenge. Further *Axioms* I reſerve till the next. I remain, *&c.*

LETTER V.

Containing more Axioms.

SIR,

WIthout any Preface, I go on in laying down yet more *Axioms* of inconteſted Morality.

Axiom 3. *In the Buſineſſes of Life, more* * *publiok Good ſhould have the Preference to that which*

* See Scriptures afterward in the Compariſon.

which is personal and private. The Natu
of Things bears, that the one should be sub
ordinated to the other; for our private Goo
is so interwoven with the publick, and depend
so upon it, that in the Preference of the Pu
blick to the Private, the Interests of privat
Persons, Constituents of the Publick, will b
found: Thus, by a Rebound, the public
proves our private Good. All grant this i
Thesi. Men of publick Spirits, and who sa
crificed, or at least subjected private Interest
to these of their Country, have been in grea
and just Estimation, not only amongst Chri
stians, but also amongst the very Heathens
The Maxim then may be assumed; and, being
amongst the first Principles of Morality, it re
quires no Probation. I shall only (accordin
to my usual Method) annex a Corrolary o
two, for illustrating it further. *Cor.* 1*st.* It i
then contrary to Reason, for any, so much a
in his Heart, to desire (but it is yet far worse
from private Views, and the Prospects of pri
vate Advantage, to give Consent to) an
Thing which he knows to be unjust, and of
Tendency, in the Nature of the Thing, pre
judicial unto some publick Interest. And if so
it is utterly unaccountable to demolish public
Interests for building our own Houses. *Cor.*
2*d.* In the Competition, when either a whol
Society shall risque the being brought low, an
gradually ruined, or private Persons must forego

some

me Conveniencies of Life; yea even tho' its
ecessaries should be impaired to some degree,
hile yet we may live, tho' not so convenient-
or plentifully: Unbyassed Reason will give
clear Suffrage, namely let these Conveniencies rather go, yea, and let us generously and cheerfully comply to be straitned as to some Necessaries, and let not a whole Community suffer for gratifying our Ease, the Vanity of our Minds, or any other Lust Whatsoever. *Cor.* 3*d.* It belongeth unto the Estimation we owe to the publick Good, or the welfare of Societies, whereof we are Members, of whatever Nature they be; and it is also incumbent upon us in point of Duty, that every Member thereof lay out himself under divine Influence, so far as can come within his reach, for promoving their Good. No advantageous State, as to the Means and Accommodations of this Life, can exempt one or other from the Obligations that ly upon him, by the Relations he stands in towards the Society. It is indeed generally necessary, to have and use a lawful Calling for affording Subsistance, to those who are not opulently stated. But tho' these Grounds and Motives had no place, and that the Person did swim in Wealth, yet the Tyes I speak of, are not only the same, but do also receive a considerable increase from the Handles which great Wealth and Ease do afford, for being manifoldly useful. Nature dictates

so

ſo much, and every one lays it to Heart with Reſpect to the Concerns of his own Body. Each Member of our Bodies, yea even the ſmalleſt and moſt inconſiderable of them, contributes, in Conjunction with the reſt more or leſs, for the Behoof and Benefit of the whole Body: And aſſuredly the ſame Reaſon holds, as to Bodies politick, or of whatſoever Nature they may be. *Cor.* 4. True Morality muſt then aſſuredly prove a great Bleſſing to Mankind. Societies of all Sorts would flouriſh, and be ſtrengthned by a Conduct, and Improvement of this Kind: Whereas, upon the contrary, they gradually decay, and are carried to Ruin, when ſuch as belong unto them, and eſpecially they who have the Rule and Overſight of them, are wholly ſwayed by private and ſelfiſh Views, without any due Regard unto the publick Good. And I know not any one Thing that more diſcrediteth Religion, and ſtrengtheneth the Prejudices of Libertines and Atheiſts more againſt it, than when a ſelfiſh, unjuſt, unkindly, and an unprofitable Converſation, is covered with a great and ſpecious Profeſſion of Religion. It cannot eſcape to give ſad Umbrage in this Matter, that Perſons who pretend much higher, ſhould be unable to ſtand, and would be caſten as uſeleſs and hurtful at ſuch a Bar, as even the Glimmerings of Nature might ſuffice to erect.

Axiom

Axiom 4. *It is in no Caſe juſt and lawful, have our Minds * evil affected towards our eighbour.* I mean, it is contrary to Reaſon, d an Incroachment upon moral Equity, to tertain the leaſt Inclination towards his urt, or to omit, yea, and even to be remiſs in iſhing his Good, and endeavouring to pro-ove it in all poſſible Ways; and that becauſe Reſentments we entertain upon the Ac-unt of Provocations given us by him. For xplication of this Maxim, pleaſe conſider, t, That (which was before obſerved) the aw ſtates our Duty, as otherwiſe, ſo parti-larly in all that is incumbent upon us to-ards our Neighbour; and the Obligation we e under to perform theſe Duties, hath no ependence upon his Deportment towards us. dly, Howſoever Injuries done to us by him, do deed render the Performance of the Offices Love and Kindneſs due to him, propor-onally difficult; yet this is intirely owing nto the Perverſeneſs of our Natures. Not-withſtanding, as the pretended, or real Inju-ies, do not in the leaſt impair the Obligation hat's upon us, as aforeſaid, ſo they render heſe kindly Offices the more diſintereſted and enerous. 3*dly*, The excellent and golden Rule of *Benignity* and *Equity* (mentioned in a ormer Axiom) holdeth equally here, *viz.* We ought

* Jam. 5. 9. Eſt. 5. 13. 1 Kings 11. 4. Gal. 5. 26.

ought to deal with others, as we have ju
Warrant to desire that they should deal wit
us; assuredly none of us can well endure th
our Neighbour should entertain any Rancou
against us, and we are ready to think our selv
injured, so far as we are brought to suffer b
him in this Manner, at least we think we ha
good and just Causes to desire, that he woul
wholly lay aside his evil Mind towards us
and therefore we ought to have the like Con
sideration of him, and do owe him the sam
Tenderness which we would desire to be shew
ed to us in our own Case. *4thly*, Secre
Grudges, Rancour, Irritation, and Heart
Risings, whether against God or Man, are in
trinsically, or in their own Nature, *moral Evil*
and therefore no pretext can justifie them. What
ever we may alledge to have been provokin
unto us, can never amount to a Reason fo
what is evil in it self, and therefore must con
tinue so to be, so long as it hath a Being. Ou
Pretexts and Apologies can never alter the Na
ture of Things. Prudence requires that we b
aware of trusting these who deceive us, and w
have no cause for a *complacential* Love, where th
Object doth not challenge it; but nothing can
be justly excepted against a Love of *Benevolenc*
and Compassion. So much shall suffice for the
4th Maxim.

Axiom 5. *The Recreations and Pleasantries o*
Life, of whatsoever Nature, ought still to be such

come within the Compaſs of the perfect Rule. low me to add another Branch, which might a diſtinct *Axiom*, but for brevities Sake, and regard it belongeth to the ſame Purpoſe, I ll take in with the preceeding, viz. *Theſe creations ought never to interfere † with the ighty and ſerious Buſineſs of Life*: They ſhould holly Vail to theſe weighty Matters, where-to they muſt not only be ſubordinated, but o ſubſervient. For opening this complex axim, (which I preſume needs no Proof) ffer the following Notes, 1*ſt*, The Perfecti- of the Rule contained in the *ten Words*, (of hich before) doth neceſſarly bear, that it ſt extend unto every Concern of Life. Our eat Law-giver has left none of them without e Verge of this perfect Law, and foraſmuch as e recreative Parts do, amongſt others, chal-ge their own regular Conſideration, they muſt eds come within the Compaſs of that ade-ate Rule. Hence 2*dly*, The Nature, Dig-y, and proper Work of reaſonable Creatures, all declare, that *Diverſion* and Sport, (or hatever Name you give it) may not juſtly be ade the Buſineſs of any Man; it is for more ble Ends, and a more excellent Work, that r Maker has given us a rational Being, nei-er will the Light of Nature, or juſt and un-aſſed Reaſon allow, that too much either of rength or Time ſhall be beſtowed upon Re-creations;

† 1 Cor. 10. 31. Col. 3. 17.

creations; our Souls and Bodies ought to b
imployed in Work becoming their Lord, agre
able unto our rational Natures, and ſuiti
our ſeveral Characters and Stations. It is tr
the Bow cannot be ſtill in Bent, our Frailties bo
in Body and Mind, require the ſlacking that l
tenſeneſs for a Time, which otherwiſe is neceſſa
for plying Affairs of Weight, and more eſpecia
ſuch wherein the mind is imployed chiefly, neve
theleſs, even the faint Light of Reaſon declar
that whatſoever is recreative ſhould be entir
calculated, for advancing the more ſerious, a
important Buſineſs of Life. *3dly*, No Rec
ation then, may in the leaſt intrench upon,
be prejudcial unto Things *ſacred*. All Reaſ
condemns whatſoever is unſuitable unto t
profound Veneration that's due unto a Die
or hath in the Nature of the Thing any Te
dency to undiſpoſe us for the Acknowled
ments we owe unto the God of Glory, wh
ther by more dire& Worſhip, or throughout t
Strain of our Converſation. They come in
the Account of Profaneneſs, and approach t
wards Blaſphemies, which incroach up
Things of ſo excellent a Nature; and ther
fore, may not be reckoned juſt Pleaſantri
The reverential Awe we ſhould have to a Di
ty, I preſume is ſo clear to any ſober, and u
byaſſed Mind, that ſuch will be at no Demu
towards condemning whatſoever hath an hu
ful Influence thereupon, as *Irreligious* or *P*
fa

4*thly*, The ſame *Axiom* alſo bears, that reations, and Diverſions, as well as other ineſſes of Life, ſhould be adjuſted unto the t End, and other ſubordinate Aims we required to propoſe unto our ſelves. None of e Recreations are juſt, which (as we are ed) have in their Nature a Tendency to , and ſtrengthen the * *Vanity of our Minds*, o prove Incentives unto any *Luſt*. Right ſon demands, that they be Helps, and Adcles to *Vertue*, and not Cheriſhers of *Vice*, of any malign Influence that Way. In a rd, Religion and Reaſon require, that all Recreations of Life ſhould be both of that ture, and alſo confined within theſe Limits, ch render them profitable, being of uſe to poſe us for the great Buſineſs of Life, both o Worſhip and Converſation, and in no g prejudicial unto that which is ſacred, ſerious in the Concerns of our ſeveral Sta s. Were I inclined to dilate this Head, I e a large Field opened for detecting the reaſonableneſs, as well as other Enormities nany Things, which are in Vogue amongſt Pleaſures of Life, as the moſt generally emed *Plays*, *Comedies*, *Tragedies*, and other n Stuff, wherein many Wickedneſſes are reſented in an alluring Dreſs, and cloathed

* Eph. 4. 17. Tit. 3. 3.

with polite, and enticing Characters. T
towring Pride, and other exorbitant Affe
ons, and Paſſions, with a manifold Fewe
vain, and corrupt Minds, are painted out w
ſuch Colours, and ſet in ſuch Poſtures then
as are moſt exactly fitted to recommend the
whereas they ought, and Reaſon challeng
that they ſhould be had in a juſt Deteſt
on. I might alſo enlarge upon the Incro
ments which are made therein, upon Mat
moſt ſerious, and ſacred; for, if any Th
that hath the leaſt Relation unto Piety
thought fit to come in, it is for the moſt
(in the preſent State of theſe Shows, and In
ludes) rather adjuſted to a recommending
Heatheniſm, than fitted for any End, or Uſe
ly religious. But I enter not upon a Pur
which many great Men have moſt fully trea
The ſame Maxim might alſo lead me to a
tecting the Unreaſonableneſs of *vain Talk*
* *fooliſh Jeſtings*, and whatſoever elſe belo
unto a *vain Converſation*. I enter not into
Puddle; theſe Vanities and Wickedneſſes
not ſtand at the Bar of the forementioned
om, and ſo do run croſs unto Reaſon. She
I enter upon a Detail of the Contrarieti
am afraid I would find the Field too lar
and therefore, I ſhall only remind you of
Ma

* Eph. 5. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 18.

tter of Fact, that is ſufficiently known from concurring Hiſtories of primitive Times, ely that Perſons come to Age, and who e received by Baptiſm into the Boſom of Church did, together with their Heathen- ſolemnly abjure the Devil, with his *Pomp Shows*, and other ſuch Trumpery, as be- ing unto his Kingdom, and unworthy of ſtians. So much for the 5th *Maxim*.

lxiom 6th, *No Perſons whatſoever, ought to under ſuch Regards, or be ſo far conſidered* † *s, as to procure a ſwerving from the way of injoined by this Law, from the Conſidera- we have of them in any Reſpects, or from ſpects of whatſoever Nature we may have about , or any Thing we think performable by them.* illuſtrating this Maxim, the following Aſ- ons may be pondered. 1. I freely and tily acknowledge, that in our Buſineſs and nagements amongſt Men, all juſt Conſide- ons of Perſons ought to be had, as they diverſly circumſtanced, and variouſly re- d to us. *Honour* is to be cheerfully and ingly *given* * *unto them to whom it is due*, ac- ing to their diverſe Places, Qualities, Sta- s, and the Relations wherein we ſtand ards them. Moreover, right Reaſon ſhews we ought in † *Love to ſerve one another*, and to uſe every * lawful and proper Mean,

If. 2. 22. Gal. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 7. 23. * Rom. 13. 7. l. 5. 13. * 1 Cor. 9. 19, 20, 21.

both for engaging our Neighbours into
Ways of Virtue, and alſo for procuring
maintaining Friendſhip with them. It is
an Effect of Chriſtian Prudence to gain in
and generous Ways the Favour of theſe
are Perſons of Worth, and may be uſeful
us. In one Word, a *humane*, † *affable*,
gaining Deportment, is both a Duty and O
ment, and alſo of manifold Uſefulneſs in L
Notwithſtanding 2. The *Authority of the*
and only Law-giver our ſovereign Lord, chal
geth ſo much of Regard from every ratio
Creature, that our Duty in its whole C
paſs, and in every circumſtanced Caſe, is to
determined by the Interpoſition of his Aut
rity, and only thereby. Nothing beſides t
may juſtly come under any Conſideration,
deciſive, and ſtating either Sin or Duty.
Reaſon then ſaith, as well as Religion
mandeth, that in all and each of the Conc
ments of Truth and Error, Equity and Ini
ty, and in every Affair that belongs unto P
towards God, or Juſtice and Mercy tow
Man, the Nature of Right and Wrong ſh
be examined and pondered with ſuch
partiality, as if at that very Moment we
to account to the *righteous Judge of the*
Earth, and with as little Regard to any
ſon or Party, and in particular to theſe
ot

† Jam. 3. 17.

rwiſe might Byaſs us the wrong Way, as if never had been in the World.

xiom. 7th. *Moral Evil is the* † *worſt of ls.* Penal Evil is indeed ſtraitning, and af- us deeply, but as inflicted by the *righte- Judge*, it is good, and carrieth his Stamp it. It is a notable Mean for diſplaying vindicating his leſed Honour, and is often ſſary, and uſeful for the good of theſe who eby ſuffer. However, the Lord * *maketh elf known thereby*, and his Work in this, in every thing elſe is *honourable* † *and glo-*. But for what concerns *Moral Evil*, s wholly and only Evil, and hath nothing ood in it: Beſides, that it's ſtricking a- ſt the Majeſty of an infinitely glorious , rendereth it in a Sort of an infinite E- nity. For further Illuſtration of this *im*, I ſubjoin the following *Corrolaries*, *nſequences*. 1. It is plainly connected with *Axiom*, and even inlaid with it that the ction of *Moral Evils* in us, together with ources from whence they proceed, and thing elſe belonging to them, and a war- us faithfully and honeſtly, according to xigences thereof, ſuch dealing I ſay, muſt be an Office not only of real Kindneſs, lſo of the moſt true and greateſt Friend- and when it is performed from ſincere

a. 1. 4. 6. Rom. 7. 23, 24. * Pſ. 9. 16. † Pſ. .

Love, it ought to be valued highly. Not
ſhould excite higher Strains of Thankfu
both to God and Man, than ſuch Expreſ
of real Tenderneſs and Kindneſs. A Te
ment of this Kind, as to what concerns
Body and outward Eſtate, would be juſtly l
ed upon with ſuch an Eye by every wiſe
ſon, and aſſuredly this honeſt Dealing, a
what concerns the Soul, is a Benefit ſo m
the greater, that the Soul's Worth is inc
parably beyond that of the Body, and outw
Eſtate, and the exerciſe of Love, in the
mentioned Events is truly the more gene
that it may readily be preſumed much, i
intirely diſintereſted: For tho' ſuch O
be in reality the moſt friendly, as of a
dency to deliver us from the greateſt of E
Yet they are rarely intertained with Kind
and do ordinarly excite the higheſt Diſple
and heavieſt Reſentments, tho' yet truly
are the moſt obliging Offices. 2. Foraſ
as *Moral Evils* are undoubtedly the gre
not to be compared, or put on a Level
any other, it is contrary to Reaſon for
Perſon ſo to Balance them with Tro
whatſoever, as to give Way unto, or inte
the leaſt Motion, or Inclination towards a
into the choice of any thing that's Evil *m*
when the Competition betwixt *Sin* and *S*
ing is ordered in ſovereign and wiſe P
dence. In no Caſe may the leaſt *Moral*

any ſuch Evil may be called little) be oſen as a juſt Expedient for eviting the great- of Troubles. So much for *Moral Axioms.* greater Number might have been aſſigned, d I queſtion not but ſome more of them ve occurred to you, or may be found out on a further Search. Notwithſtanding, I all reſt ſatisfyed with theſe which I have entioned, and I expect they will abundantly fice for ſupporting the Structure I deſign raiſe upon them. I intend by the follow- Miſſives, to inſtitute an ingenuous Com- riſon betwixt humane Nature in its pre- t State, and the little Abſtract of Moral ety and Equity I formerly laid down. In s I deſign to be Brief: But do reſolve to ell ſome longer upon the *Axioms*, and I ubt not but that in the Iſſue, it will be de to appear incontroulably that the Na- e of Man, as now ſtated, is croſs, and ntrary to the one and other. I add no re at the Time, but that I remain, *&c.*

LET-

LETTER VI.

Containing a Compariſon betwixt humane Natu and ſome Parts of the Abſtract of Morali before-mentioned.

SIR,

I Preſume our Way is now prepared for more near Approach to the main Deſign this Correſpondence, *viz.* To bring the preſe State of humane Nature unto the Touch-ſto of inconteſted Morality, as before ſet dow both in the Abſtract and *Axioms*. I think n that any ſober Perſon will entertain the le Jealouſy about the Solidity and Strength the Foundation; and therefore I may, wi the greater Aſſurance, proceed to raiſe the tended Building upon it. Should I touch all t Poſitions of the Abſtract, in Order to t Compariſon, it would be a long and laborio Work; and I cannot incline to a launchi out into ſo vaſt a Sea: Nevertheleſs, I thi it proper to glance at a few Poſitions, ſhewing how eaſy the Progreſs might be, eaſe a more full treating of theſe Purpoſes w deſigned. Pleaſe then take Two or Thr more clear and obvious Aſſertions, which lay down as ſo many *Poſtulata*, or *Conceſſio* and they may be comprized in a very f Words. 1*ſt*. R

1*ſt*. Reaſonable Creatures are, becauſe *rea-ſonable*, and made fit to know and acknow-ledge their Lord; becauſe, I ſay, they are reaſonable, they are, upon that very Head, as well as on other Accounts, under the ſtrong-eſt and ſweeteſt Obligations to lay out themſelves, under a higher Influence, for attaining ſo much as is poſſible of the * *Knowledge* of that God unto whom they entirely owe Life, Breath, and all Things, and to make that their great, leading, and moſt pleaſant Buſineſs. It were monſtrouſly abſurd for any rational Creature, to deny the Ties which lie upon him, to uſe every poſſible Mean for knowing his Lord and Creator; foraſmuch as this Knowledge is the Ground-work of whatever is required of him in point of the *Acknowledgements*, Homage, and Obedience, which are due by Subjects unto the *Prince of the Kings of the Earth*.

2*dly*, In like Manner I preſuppoſe, that we are all obliged to live under continued Impreſ-ſions of the moſt profound † *Veneration* towards him, who is our *Lord*, our *Law-giver*, and *Judge*. However, that *ſervile Fear*, which procureth a flying from God, and is the Re-ſult of *Hatred* and *Averſion*, from a deep Con-ſciouſneſs of Guilt; however, I ſay, that ſuch a

* 1 Chron. 28. 9. Pſal. 100. 1, 2, 3. Acts 17. 23. Iſa. 43. 10. Deut. 26. 17. † Mal. 3. 16. Pſ. 8. through-out. Col. 3. 17. Prov. 28. 14. Jer. 10. 6. Iſa. 33. 22.

a Fear, I mean of Averſion and Hatred, ough to be avoided, and we are bound to the utte moſt to guard againſt it; yet a Fear of Re verence is due unto our ſovereign Lord through out every Moment of our Lives.

3dly, We are obliged to take wholly from him all the *Regulations* * which belong to ou Worſhip and Converſation.

4thly, It no leſs becometh, and is alſo poſi tively required of us, to be ſtill in a Temper o *cautious* † *Obſervance*, leſt we recede from theſe *Rules* to the right or left Hand.

So much preſuppoſed, let us ingenuouſly compare the preſent State of our Natures with theſe Obligations, which are ſo very clear and inconteſted. I do indeed lay my Account with the Deriſion and Banter of *Libertines*, and profane Men, who ſcarce have any better Tools than ſarcaſtick Jeſts and Scoffing, whereby to attack Things ſerious and ſacred. But, as they who have Eyes to ſee, regard not the Quibblings of blind Men about the Light and Colours, nor do they call in Queſtion what they perceive plainly, becauſe of ſuch Fooleries; ſo no judicious and ſober Perſon will entertain the leaſt Doubtfulneſs about clear Matter of Fact, upon the Account of the pitiful Shifts, and weak Pretexts of brutiſh Men, (how-

* Deut. 32. 46, 47. Mat. 28. 20. Acts 2. 42. 1 Tim. 6. 13, 14, &c. † Pſal. 16. 8. & 89. 7. Gen. 17. 1, 2.

(however they may be esteemed Wits) who know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. And, as before, I shall set down some some scriptural Passages upon the Margine. Our Libertines may, and whether they will or not, yet an impartial Heathen would allow the Scriptures to be competent Witnesses of Matter of Fact, when the Facts are otherwise sufficiently made out, and confirmed by continued Tracts of harmonious Experience. Hereupon, without any Amusement, from the empty Captions of weak Men, I go streight on to the intended Comparison; and, according to the *Postulata*, or *Concessions* just now laid down, a very melancholly View displayeth it self, with much lamentable Evidence. And, with Reference to the first *Concession*, I observe the following Strains of our deep Corruption.

1*st*, So far are we from pressing after the utmost attainable Knowledge of the true God, in Ways, and by Means which he hath laid down, and made conveniently accessible to us, and from looking upon it as our Happiness, that upon the quite contrary, the strong Current of the Malignity of our Nature carrieth our Thoughts intirely off from that Excellent Object. *God is not* † *in all our Thoughts* (or all our Thoughts are *no God*, as the Original bears) the strong propensions of Corruption in us, would utterly exterminate all just and right

† Ps. 10. 4. & 14. 1. & 53. 1.

right Thoughts of a Deity. *We like not to retain* * *God in our Knowledge*, and are very far from centering in him, as the pleaſant Seat of our Thoughts and Concernments, howſoever highly rational, ſuch a Temper and Way will be found.

2*dly*, The more excellent, proper, and refined Impreſſions of a Deity (to which alſo the Light of Nature giveth its Suffrage) are in our preſent State the chief Matter of our Averſion. That God is * *holy*, a Being (ſhall I ſo expreſs it) altogether pure, and ſpotleſs, and who *hateth all Iniquity*, and that he is the *righteous* † *Judge of the whole Earth*, with more of the like Nature, no Man will call in Queſtion, who hath not intirely renounced Reaſon and Conſcience; nevertheleſs, corrupt Nature is ſo far from taking the leaſt Complacency in a Deity, with a due Regard to the fore-mentioned, and other the like Excellencies, that upon the contrary, they are the Matter of its keeneſt Averſion. Whenſoever juſt Impreſſions of his Holineſs, and that he is the righteous Judge of all the Earth, are carried in upon the Conſcience, and convincing Views of our Obnoxiouſneſs unto righteous Puniſhment, are ſet home with Power, we are far from taking any Pleaſure in a juſt and holy God, we really hate him, and (were it poſſible) we would fly from him

† Rom. 1. 18, 28. Eph. 2. 12. * Pſ. 5. 4, 6. Rev. 4. 8. † Gen. 18. 25. Joh. 5. 22, 27.

m, inſtead of proſtrating our ſelves before
m, *and *making Supplication to our Judge.* The
limmerings of Nature, and Experience of the
me Kind, give ſome dark Views of this; but
riptural Light † ſetteth it in a full Evidence.
3*dly*, In particular it is manifeſt even by the
eak Taper of Nature's Glimmerings, and no
ber Perſon, Chriſtian or Heathen denies it,
amely, That God is the ſovereign Lord, and
ath full and incontroulable Right (ſhall I ſo ex-
reſs it) to diſpoſe of all and every one of his
reatures, as ſeemeth good unto him; no
Man debateth the Matter. Let us now in-
enuouſly compare Mankind as ſtated at preſent,
ith this evident and indiſputable Truth, and
will manifeſtly appear, that our Natures are
ow of a Mould directly contrary thereunto;
hich Truth yet is ſo manifeſt, that it may be
eckoned an *Axiom.* This, in general Terms,
dmits of no Diſpute; every one will readily
rant, that it becomes the Clay to ly at the
otter's Feet; and that it is a Behaviour ſuited
o a Creature indued with Reaſon, to proſtrate
ſelf before a ſovereign Lord, to be diſpoſed
y him according to his Pleaſure, in every
hing, without Exception or Reſerve, at leaſt
t is our inconteſted Duty ſo far to honour our
overeign and juſt Lord, as to acknowledge he
ay do ſo, yet humbly and earneſtly intreating
that

* Job. 9. 15. † Gen. 3. 8. Job 21. 14, 15. John
. 19, 20, &c. Luke 19. 14, &c. * Mat. 20. 13, 14, 15.

that the * Diſpoſal may be for good; but the Set of our Spirits is ſo far contrary, yea and contradictory to this, that all of us would be † *Gods*, and do claim the *Diſpoſure of our* * *ſelves* both as to Precept and Providence. This appeareth more eſpecially when the *divine Law* and our Luſts, come into † Competition in circumſtanced Caſes, and in a peculiar Manner when ſovereign and ſpotleſs Providence runneth croſs to theſe Ends which we propoſe, and the Expectations we had intertained. Then it is that inſtead of acknowledging our ſovereign Lord by Acquieſcence in the *revealed Decree* and ſtooping * quietly under his Diſpleaſures our Hearts are filled with Reluctancies and Rebellions, which belch out into manifold Repinings and Rage, more † covered or open and chiefly when our Straits are carried towards an extreme Height, and no Iſſue from them for the Time appeareth. But not to enlarge upon a ſad Matter of Fact, which hath as many Witneſſes in the main, as there are Perſons upon the Face of the Earth, and is acknowledged and lamented by all, who are under any Concernment about their immortal Souls. I only add

4*thly*, That howſoever Reaſon plainly ſaith that Ignorance of a Deity in any, and yet much

more

* Judges 10. 15. † Gen. 3. 8. * Pſal. 12. 4. † Pſal. 2. 3. * Pſal. 39. 9. 1 Sam. 3. 18. 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26, &c. † Iſa. 8. 21. 1 Cor. 10. 10.

ore in these who enjoy the most desirable eans for Knowledge, such Ignorance, I say, veth the greatest Causes of just and heavy egret; so much I think is beyond Debate: s also, that it is a Matter of the highest Imrt, and a most just Concern and Interest of asonable Creatures to have their Sentiments d Impressions concerning the God of Glory ll adjusted to the Discoveries he hath given himself, of whatsoever Nature they may : Yet sad and inconteſted Experience verith, that many Thousands, and sundry of ese in Repute, who likewise have access to e choicest Means of Instruction, do yet live urely in gross Darkness and Ignorance, nor ly without just Notions concerning a Deity, t also under a strong Aversion from, and mity against the cleareſt † Means for atning Light. Many also, and some of the eatest Note amongst Men, are so far under e Sway of their Lusts, as to take up securely, d to settle upon such Notions and *Sets of Reion*, both as to Doctrine and Practice, which ey find most agreeable to these Lusts, and think will best suit their *secular Interests* thout further Inquiry, or giving the least Intainment unto any Motion leading that ay, as if Religion were nothing else but a *itick Engine*, or *Machine*. From this Source it

† Hos. 4. 1, 2. John 3. 19, 20. 2 Tim. 4. 3. Is. 9, 10, 11.

it is, that great and unaccountable Blunde
in religious Matters are maintained by whe
Societies, and propogated from one Gener
tion to another in a long Tract of Succeſſio
and the leaſt Motion towards a detecting, a
reforming of theſe, is often oppoſed, and cruſh
by the higher Powers, not much, if at all,
leaſt not ſtill from the Conviction of Duty, b
meerly leſt a political, tho wicked Repo
ſhould be diſturbed. So much as a Touch
what relates to the firſt *Poſtulatum*, or Co
cluſion mentioned in the Beginning of th
Miſſive.

I go on to the 2*d*, Namely, that reaſonab
Creatures are under the cleareſt and ſtrong
Obligations to have and maintain an habi
al Impreſſion of *Reverence*, to that God, w
is the * *God of Glory*, and whoſe glorious E
cellencies challenge ſo much. Beſides, th
our Breath is in his Hand, and every Thi
that concerns us, is intirely at his Diſpoſu
None, can call in Queſtion the Obligation th
lieth upon us hereunto, unleſs he deny all R
ſon, and go deliberatly, and willfully, aga
it. The ſcriptural Doctrine about this M
ter, is moſt purely rational, I need not
large thereupon, a Touch may ſuffice,
Thing being inconteſtible. *To fear God,*
to keep his Commandments, is the All of M
T

* Acts 7. 2. Pſal. 29. 1, 2, &c.

us the Original hath it, *It is the beginning of Wisdom: Unto Man the Lord saith* *: *the fear of the Lord is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil Understanding.* Let us then fairly compare present State of humane Nature (before great and merciful Change, of which in Sequel.) Let us, I say, compare our pre- State, with plain and incontested Duty in Matter, and it will be found as evident ny Fact can be, that this is not the natu- Set, and Bent of our Spirits, and that our ve Propension goeth the quite contrary with a mighty Current. I do indeed con- that sudden Displays of the Majesty of l, Providences alarming by somewhat t and unusual, and other such Occurrences rt, or together, will procure and impress Spirit with some Awfulness, but this is of ry transitory Nature, it cometh quickly and n speedily off, *like a Morning Cloud, and arly Dew:* But so remote are we from a ed Habit of Veneration for the Majesty God, as the *leading Principle of Life*, which right Reason doth plainly demand, so far we, I say, from having this as the first and f Principle of Motion influencing our Wor- and Walk, that we don't so much as un- tand such a Temper of Spirit. And, ac- ling to the poor and empty Notions we

* Job. 28. 28. Eccl. 12. 13. Ps. 111. 10. Prov. 1. 7. 10, &c.

have of it, Nature accounts it an intolera
Bondage. Reaſon and Scripture require, t
no Intertainment be given to the leaſt irre
rent Thought of the God of Glory, or to
leaſt Motion or Inclination unſuitable to
glorious Excellencies; No rational Crea
without the greateſt Violence done to Rea
can debate the Obligation here, and yet
real Echo, or true Return we hereunto give
this in ſum, *It is a hard ſaying, who can bear*
I acknowledge that ſome there are whoſe
and Element it is, to be ſtill impreſſed w
this holy, humble and reverential Fear:
vertheleſs, as this is wholly and only ow
to a ſupernatural Change and Influence, w
out which it neither is, nor can be kept up, e
for a Moment, ſo Nature in theſe excel
Perſons, when left to it ſelf, declineth quic
to its old Byaſs. So much for the 2d Con
ſion. I ſhall for brevities ſake knit the 3d
4th together, *viz.* That it becomes us to
from our ſovereign Lord, and to ſubmit u
whatſoever Rules he hath preſcribed to us
modelling our Worſhip, and regulating our C
verſation, and are obliged to a cautious
ſervance of our Hearts, and Way, leſt
tranſgreſs theſe Rules: I cannot expect
any reaſonable Man will queſtion the Tr
and Equity of this *Poſtulatum*, and the Sc
tures declare the Matter ſo fully and point
ly, that it were ſuperfluous to enter upon

emonſtration of a Poſition, which is ſo very
ain, *viz. That God is to be worſhipped * and*
ved only in the way he himſelf hath preſcribed.
s proper that we next compare the preſent
ate of humane Nature, with this Conceſſion,
d the following Particulars will afford us
avy Views. 1. We quickly weary to keep
ouches with the Lord, as to his Inſtitutions
whatſoever Kind; plain Experience hath
covered the irregular Sett of our Natures
ll Ages ſince the beginning of the World.
e Account which the God of the Spirits of
Fleſh hath given concerning us, is continual-
verified by innumerable Receſſions from the
ſcribed Rule, namely, that tho' *God made*
n upright, † *yet he hath ſought out many In-*
tions, and continueth to do ſo. 2. The
eſt Societies have never kept their Integrity
any conſiderable meaſure of Time, every
e is Fertile of *Complyances* and *Accommodations,*
ereby the Lord's Truths, and Worſhip have
n corrupted, and the Converſations of
n polluted and poyſoned. 3. Deceitful
wicked Hearts have prompted many to
etches, beyond all juſt and modeſt Boun-
ies, whether in compliance with an * *itching*
mour, and other Luſts, or for accomodat-
themſelves in what they thought to be the
gences of their *ſecular Intereſts,* that a par-

† Mat. 15. 9. Iſa. 29. 13. Col. 2. 23. † Eccl. 7. 8,
* 2 King. 12. throughout. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

ticular Enarration might cover us with Blushe
4. I might appeal to the sedate Though
and afflicting Reflections of the best of Me
whether they find the natural Byas exce
ing strong for carrying them off from th
Rule, notwithstanding all the Restraints o
sovereign Lord hath laid upon us, and co
trary unto that sincere Approbation, and hear
Respect thereunto, with which the Lord h
endued them. In one Word I must say, Th
are utter Strangers unto themselves, who kno
not the mighty Propension of Nature to I
regularities, which the choicest of Men, no
withstanding the utmost Caution, do new
wholly escape. So much for the Compari
of humane Nature, with the moral Abstra
I remain, *&c.*

LETTER VII.

*Containing a Comparison of the present State
humane Nature, with the moral* Axioms.

SIR,

MY last gave some Touches at compa
ing the State of Mankind with t
little Abstract of Morality I had
presented in some former Missives. I go
now to the *moral Principles*, or *Maxims*, a
intend to ply the Comparison in that Pa
som

omewhat more closly. Please review them
the same Order wherein I had set them
own: I am not anxious about Method,
hich no doubt might have been adjusted bet-
r than I have done, or can do.

The first of these Principles was this, *viz.* *Whatsoever we have just Cause to think that o-
ers should do to us, we are obliged to deal in
e same manner with them,* See *Missive* IV.
xiom I. with the *Exposition* and *Corrolaries.*
et us then make a fair and ingenuous Com-
rison of humane Nature, with that plain
axim, and it will be found utterly degene-
ted from, and contrary thereunto. I shall
t accomplish a diligent Search to find out
is, nor do I incline to dilate upon it, a
w of many particulars may be considered.
t, We are now intirely off from these Re-
lations, the God of our Being hath given,
d injoined us, with Respect to our selves.
ndry of these I have mentioned before, and
ve not to repeat. In summ, it's manifest
at we are not our own, but do belong unto
od as his Creatures, and therefore our Love
, and Care of our selves ought not to be
bitrary, but must be conformed to the Rule
hich our sovereign Lord hath prescribed us.
ll centereth chiefly here, *viz.* The just Con-
rnment we should be under as to our selves,
nsists in a pointing aright towards our

Lord and Maker, as our *ultimate* † *End*, an
preſſing towards that End under Heavens I
fluences, with all poſſible Vigour. And ſo
aſmuch as we are required to bear the li
tender Regard to our Neighbour, it followe
inavoidably that we are obliged to ſhow it,
laying out our ſelves to perſuade him, and
be otherwiſe Aſſiſtant to him, as we can ha
acceſs towards his pointing aright to that gre
End, and preſſing accordingly after it. Oth
Regards, whether to our ſelves or our Neig
bours, are Deſtructive, and Self-ſeeking, othe
wiſe, is but Self-deſtroying *. Let us he
upon inſtitute the Compariſon, and I may a
peal to the Conſcience of any ſober Perſo
whether this be the preſent Mould of huma
Nature, namely in all the Concernments abo
our ſelves and our Neighbours, to be regula
ed by the Regards we ought to have to t
great End, and to every juſt Mean which lea
thereunto. Aſſuredly the Stream and Curre
runs generally out in a quite other and co
trary Channel. *We make Proviſion for the Fle*
we ſerve diverſe Luſts and Pleaſures in our o
Perſons †; and do accordingly carry oth
alongſt with us to the like Evils. Were it n
ſo, the World would be an *Eden* of excelle
Virtues, and pleaſant Delights, whereas u

† Mat. 6. 21. 33. Pſ. 27. 4. Luk. 10. 42. Pſ.
24. * Hoſ. 13. 9. 2 Tim. 3. 1. † Rom. 13. 14. T
3. 3.

the contrary, it is (with very little Exception) a Chaos of Wickedneſs and roubles.

2. It is a Debt every one would readily ink to be due unto himſelf, or at leaſt all us judge we have good reaſon, and are not the wrong to deſire that *Bowels* † *of Kind-ſs* and *Compaſſion* be extended towards us, d Help afforded us, as our Neceſſities and roubles, of whatſoever Nature may require, d in ſo far as, it can be within the reach of r Neighbours to aſſiſt us. This ſure, is a oſt juſt Demand, founded upon right Reaſon, ery one is perſuaded of ſo much in his own ſe, and the *Axiom* clearly bears, that the y ſame good Offices are due by him to his eighbour. Let us now compare herewith e preſent State of Mankind, and the Com-riſon will give us moſt diſmal Views. I ght inſtance in diverſe particulars, but that uld carry me too far: Take only theſe two. Tho' every one doth challenge effectual mpaſſion as a juſt Debt to himſelf, yet de-nerated and corrupt Self-love is in many ſo y ſtrong, that ſuch Compaſſion towards Neighbours, is little found, and expreſſed, ere, beſides the more common Relation of eighbourhood, the neareſt Tyes whether of ture, Blood, and Affinity, or other ſuch, do

† Job. 6. 14. Col. 3. 12, 13. Pſ. 41. 1, 2, 3. Job. 21. &c.

do manifeſtly require it. *Natural Affection* frequently ſubdued and ſwallowed up by Luſt and beſides its great Weakneſs which hinder eth its going any juſt Length; it is caſten off by many, and giveth place to its Contrarie 2*d*, When true, and ſometimes heroical Virt conflicteth with great Straits, the Purity Reaſon would ſay, That all poſſible and eo paſſionate Aſſiſtances are a juſt Debt unto upon the moſt virtuous, honourable, and gen rous Accounts. A Perſon ſo happily endued a ſtated, would be but too ready to think th more of Help is due unto him than he c reaſonably expect. To be ſure the Indigenc which often accompany true Piety, ought to look'd to in a peculiar manner. Neverthele the moſt part of Mankind is ſo far wanting ſuch noble Exigences, that they will be fou utterly deſtitute * of that *Kindneſs* and *Tende neſs*, when the Secrets of all Mens Hear ſhall be judged at the great accounting Da *I was Sick and in Priſon, and ye viſited me* &c. I need not inſiſt upon a plain Hea Moreover 3*d*, Were it not from unaccoun able wants of this Compaſſion and Tenderne (which yet every one thinketh due unto hi ſelf) the Diſtreſſes in the World would be leaſt very few in Compariſon of what th really are. If the Food, or rather Fewel

Luſt

† Rom. 1. 31, 2 Tim. 3. 1, 2, 3, &c. * Mat. 42, 43.

Lusts, were imployed for charitable, just, and generous Uses, and if Men would satisfie themselves with the true Exigences of Necessity and Decency, suitable to their several Stations: And especially did each of us lay out himself to be as useful unto others, in his Station as possibly he can, all real Indigencies might be supplyed conveniently, and (excepting Judgments extraordinary) no Persons needed to want what's needful, and the dint even of extraordinary Strokes would at least be much lessened. The *Axiom* under View will bear all that I have said, and yet much more. Every Person in Straits would think it just Desire that his Neighbour not only abridge himself in his Superfluities, but also take some stretch even in Necessaries, rather than that his Fellow rational Creature should perish. So much we think owing to us, and the very same do we owe to others. Thus the Miseries which abound in the World, do issue in a great part, from the want of that Sympathy which every Body would think the most just Debt in his own Case, and the scriptural Doctrine in the Matter is highly Rational, *viz. Whoso hath this Worlds* * *Goods, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* So much for Instances upon the 2*d* Particular. I add but a 3*d* Branch of

* 1 Joh. 3. 17. Jam. 2. 15, 16. Luk. 3. 11. &c.

of Compariſon, wherewith I conclude what I intend to repreſent upon the firſt *Axiom*.

It's manifeſt that each of us would think the Deſire moſt juſt in ſuch circumſtanced Caſes of our own, as requires it, *viz.* That no Perſon take any Advantage againſt us, and to our Hurt, from Weakneſs and Slips on our Part, through Inadvertancy, and otherwiſe: As alſo that no Handle be taken againſt us from any humane Laws, or Conſtitutions, to the Prejudice of that, which upon the ſtricteſt, and moſt impartial Inquiry, we would think, as before God, to be material, and moral Juſtice in our Concerns. And in caſe our Neighbour poſſeſſes what's ours, and to which he hath no Title valid, before the Lord, we would juſtly think that Juſtice and Conſcience require a Reſtitution in ſuch Caſes, and the Scripture is clear, *Luk.* xix. 8. *Exod.* xxii. 1. The ſame Meaſure then is due by us unto our Neighbours, according to the Maxim. The Scriptures are full of the ſweeteſt Strains of *material Juſtice*, unto which it is moſt proper that humane Laws do vail, † *The Fruit of the Spirit is in all Righteouſneſs, and Goodneſs, and Truth. He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is Good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*, &c. &c. Let us now herewith compare the general Set of Mankind, and the many

† Eph. 5. 9. Mic. 6. 8. Tit. 2. 11, 12. Gal. 5. 22. &c.

any unjuſt, unmerciful, and ungenerous ractices, which abound not only with the ore openly wicked, but are alſo found a-ongſt theſe who have the faireſt Profeſſion, nd a multitude of *crooked Ways*, and manifold retches, contrary to all this, have not only led the World, but even the Churches of hriſt, as the Ruins declare, with ſuch Evi-ence, that it would afford a large Field r heavy Lamentation; but I love not to nter upon ſuch a melancholy Subject. I now o on to the 2*d Axiom*, *Letter* IV. It's there preſſed at ſome length, and amounts in a ord to this namely, *The Meaſure of our Duty God and Man, is the Declaration of Right hich our ſovereign Lord and Law-giver has given, d not his Providence, nor the Deportment of our eighbour towards us.* Two or three Things e inlaid with this Principle, which I muſt uch in a Word, in order to the Com-riſon.

1. It is our poſitive and indiſpenſible Duty go ſtraight foreward in the Ways of Chriſtian irtue, and to be continually in the exerciſe ereof, whatſoever Diſadvantages may attend , or Troubles aſſault us in the Practice ereof.

2. Howſoever *Moral Evil* may be accompa-ed with external Advantages, and be even compaſſed with all poſſible Motives of that ind, to encourage it, and whatſoever may ap-

pear

pear to depend upon any Practice of that So
tho' it were of the greateſt Weight, either
to a proſperous, or adverſe Eſtate; yet upon
account whatſoever, may we engage, into wh
we know is Evil, or be remiſs and indifferen
and far leſs may we intertain the leaſt Ave
ſion from a juſt Inquiry.

3*dly*, However we be injured by others, a
whatſoever Afflictions they may put us to ſu
fer; yet the Maxim ſheweth, that our Obl
gation remains firm, and untainted unto
poſſible good Offices towards them. Th
Axiom bears all this, and ſo it's founded upo
firm and manifeſt Reaſon. The † Scriptur
are alſo clear and copious in the Matter. L
us then compare Mankind, as preſently ſtate
with theſe incontroulable Strains of true M
rality, and the Views cannot eſcape to
afflicting. Two or three Things are of m
humbling Conſideration here. 1. True a
generous Love to Virtue, with couragious an
reſolute Adventures, in the Practice there
and that in the Face of the greateſt Oppoſ
tion, and amidſt Wants, Dangers, and Tro
bles, *&c.* ſuch Adventures, I ſay, are very ra
even amongſt the politeſt Setts of Mankin
And tho' we have ſome few unuſual Exampl
of ſuch as have gone * conſiderable Lengt
th

† Mat. 5. 44. Rom. 12. 19, 20, 21. Prov. 25.
Pſal. 35. 13. * 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3. 2 Pet. 2. 20.

hat Way, or rather in what appeared to be
ch, partly by the uneasy Constraints of Light,
nd Conviction, and also from the Prospects
hich they raised of a more refined Sort of
Honour; yet all this is rather mere Shew, than
ubstance, in Regard it amounteth no further
han to an Exchange of Vices; for true Love to
irtue is wanting all this While †. Nevertheless,
s such Stretches are but seldom found, so gene-
lly our weak Spirits do either decline to the
aths of Vice, or do utterly faint in the
ractice of true and Christian Virtue, when
is put to Conflict with great Discourage-
ents. Assuredly, without a supernatural and
ecial Influence, and sweet Views of the
eternal Rewards of Grace, these cross Tides
ill carry us far out of the pleasant Ways of
ruth, and Duty. This sure goeth against
eason, and is manifestly contrary unto the
ear † scriptural Prescripts. 2. When moral
vils flatter us with the Promises of Immuni-
from Trouble, and a Variety of other Ad-
ntages, it is too too manifest to any impar-
l Observer, how corrupt Nature is wholly
nt to toss, turn, and rack its Invention for
ecious Colours, either to *adorn* these Paths
Vice, or at least so far as is possible to co-
r their Deformity. The Arts of Hell are
almost

† 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. * Ps. 73. 24, 25. 1 Cor.
58. Ps. 17. 15. 1 Thess. 4. 17, 18, † Mat. 5. 11, 12.
m. 1. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 11, 12. Act. 5. 41, &c.

almoſt untraceable, whereby we either keep or ſhut out *convincing Light*, while we are ma upon the Defence of the evil Practices upo which we are ſet, and do promiſe to our ſelve to find our Account therein. Somewhat mor belonging to this, will come in as conveniently upon a following *Axiom*; and therefore I pro ceed to the 3d *Maxim*, Letter 5th, at th Beginning, *viz. In the Buſineſs of Life, mo publick Good ſhould have the Preference to th which is perſonal and private.* See there th Expoſition, with Corrolaries, and Conſequen ces deduced from it, which I repeat not. On ly Two Things I muſt repreſent, to clear th Compariſon; and they are abundantly man feſt. 1. It is an unaccountable Evil, and Sort of atrocious *Murder*, to undermine an deſtroy Societies; and whatſoever hath a re Tendency that Way, muſt needs be of th ſame Nature, ſo far as it goeth. 2. It the clear and poſitive Duty of every one, their ſeveral Stations, to lay out themſelv unto the uttermoſt, for the Beneſit of the *Communities* to which they reſpectively belon It is manifeſtly contrary to Reaſon, that the ſhould be any uſeleſs, and far leſs any hurtf Members amongſt them. The Scriptures, an Practices of the Cloud of Witneſſes there recorded, are clear in the Matter, to ſay n thing of the high, and heroical Strains of M

t and *Paul*, againſt which our Antagoniſts ight readily except, and cavil, tho' without round. We want not other inconteſted amples of *Chriſtian Heroes*, both recorded the ſacred Oracles, and alſo otherwiſe own in Hiſtory. You know the notable In-nces of *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, *David*, *Mordecai*, *aniel*, and his Companions, and many others hich I need not ſpecify. We have a large talogue *Hebrews* xi. throughout. I inſiſt t on the Purpoſe; only a View of the State d Managements of Mankind, with Refe-nce to this Maxim, affords a great deal of atter for heavy Reflection. Pleaſe take an ſtance or Two, ſeeing I am unwilling to nch far out, into this troubled Sea. Beyond Manner of Doubt, Societies of all Sorts ve ſuffered much, and ſuſtained a vaſt deal Prejudice in all Ages, by the ſacrificing pu-ck Good to private Intereſts. Hereof I ntion a few of many Particulars.

1ſt, *Publick Service*, both in Church and ate, hath often ſuffered much by an unac-untable Sway of *extrinſical Conſiderations*, ile the Managers of theſe Matters, or they o had Influence upon them, have procured at Truſts to Perſons, neither ſo fit nor ho-t, as even a rational Conſideration would ve diſcovered to be neceſſary. Thus much Good

Exod. 32. 31, 32. Rom. 9. 1, 2, 3.

Good has been hindred, and a vaſt deal
Harm hath been done, merely to grati
Friends. Whereas even Reaſon would ha
evinced the clear and manifeſt Obligation
lay aſide all ſuch Conſiderations, not to allo
them ſo much as a Hearing, and far leſs
give them a *caſting* and *determining Voice* wh
the Honour of God, and the publick Good
Societies were intereſted. I might enlar
hereupon, and give particular Inſtances
great and many Ruins, iſſued from this Sour
but I ſpare. Only I muſt ſay, That t
Wickedneſs is altogether unaccountable, wh
under various Pretexts, a Sort of Merchand
has been made of the moſt valuable Intere
2. In a direct Contrariety to this *Axiom*, ſu
hath been the Regard to Parties at all tim
but eſpecially in more corrupt Ages, that t
moſt violent and daring Incroachments ha
been made upon the plaineſt Rules of mo
Equity, as to *Veracity*, *Beneficence*, *Kindn*
and in many other Regards too long to me
tion, and all theſe to ſtrengthen the ſeve
Parties as the reſpective Exigences have be
thought to require. 3. The moſt eſſential a
important Concerns of Societies have be
neglected, the greateſt Services overlooked, a
Perſons of Note and Worth oppreſſed and p
ſecuted from Party-views, which often ha
carried the one and other of theſe Factio
ſo far from a ſuitable Concern about the pu

ick Good that whole Communities have en ruined, and ſometimes fell as a Prey into e Teeth of a common Enemy, while the ſe-ral Parties contended about the Manage-ent, much as if through the Conteſt of Sail-s about their private Concerns, the Veſſel ould by Neglect, or a bad Conduct, be ſuf-ed to daſh upon Rocks and Shelves, and ſo periſh. Many Stretches of this Sort I ight mention, but that the Subject is too lictive to be inſiſted on. 4. It is alſo owing to the croſeneſs of our Natures to this plain axim, that many choice *Talents* which the rd hath given, and ought to be employed publick Good, are yet wickedly and ſacri-iouſly carried off from their proper Uſes, d the *publick Good*, to ſerve ſome one or o-er Party, and in Ways moſt irregular, and moral into the detail whereof I incline not enter. Let it ſuffice in a ſuitableneſs to the ſign of theſe Miſſives, that the many and ccountable Byaſſes of our Natures in their ſent State, which carry us off from ſuch a gard to publick Good, as Reaſon and Scrip-e demand, and the *Axiom* plainly bears ſuch ontrary Sway, I muſt needs ſay, maketh one great Branch of the Proof of what I demonſtrating, *viz.* That our Natures as w ſtated, are contrary to the moſt juſt and onteſted Morality. I ſhall review the re-

manent Maxims *per* next, if the Lord will, remain, *&c.*

LETTER VIII.

Wherein the following Axioms *are consi dered.*

Sir,

WIthout any Preface I just proceed. Th 4*th* Principle or *Axiom*, *Missive* V. wa *viz. It is in no Case just and lawful to have o Minds evil affected towards our Neighbour.* S the Exposition and Corrolaries there. W may, I acknowledge, have, and it is reaso able we be impressed with a just Sense a Concernment, about whatever we see to b blame worthy in him, and we may pass a righ Verdict upon his Injuriousness to us, in whic Event we had need to take care least we de partially, being readily not very equal Judge in our own Matters. I do also confess tha there is scarce any Thing that hath more spe cious and colourable Pretexts to support i than the Wickedness which this *Axiom* taxeth foraſmuch as the Business of Life, especially i a corrupt Age, are inevitably accompanye with many provoking Occurrences: Beside that, the Degeneracy of Nature is so exceed ly great, that a Behaviour conformable unt this Maxim, would come generally under the re

put

te of *Meanneſs of Spirit*, as if the evil af-
fredneſs, which the Maxim condemns, to-
ther with the Reſentments iſſuing from
nce, did pertain unto *Magnanimity* and
atneſs of Soul. But preſuppoſing the very
theſs of Provocation, and whatſoever elſe
poſſibly be alledged, either to defend or
enuate the Evil under View, the Maxim
ds, foraſmuch as our Duty is ſtill the ſame,
ng injoined by our ſovereign Lord, and it
nanifeſtly contrary to right Reaſon, that we
uld neglect, fail, or be remiſs in the doing
hat which is incumbent upon us, whatſo-
r Provocations or Diſcouragements from
ers do fall in our Way. The Scripture are
n, and full in this Matter, as the bleſſed
mpany of Orthodox, practical Divines have
ely diſcovered, and was touched before.
us herewith compare the preſent State of
nkind, and the Views muſt needs be af-
ing to a ſober and Chriſtian Mind. To
nothing of the *Malice* *, *Envy*, *Wars*,
htings, and *Confuſions* wherewith Societies
all Kinds are filled and peſtered. I only
reſent a Particular or two, wherein a wick-
Byaſs of our Natures, contrary to this
xim, putteth it ſelf forth, even in the beſt
Men, and wanteth infinite Power to keep
own. 1*ſt*, A ſecret *Diſpleaſure* † with, and

* Tit. 3. 3. Jam. 3. 13, 14. & 4. 1. † Pſal. 37. 1.
3. 1, 2, 3. Jer. 12. 1, 2. &c.

Rage againſt the more proſperouſly Wicke
eſpecially when they get *their wicked Devi*
brought to paſs, to the prejudice of our Lor
People, and of the Intereſts of his Kingdo
whereas Reaſon and Scripture would ſay, th
we ought rather to be moved with *compa*
ſionate * *Sorrow* on their behalf, in regard th
are made thereby the riper for Deſtructi
2*d*, A Kind of covered Satisfaction and ſec
Joy, when Evil befalls them, and they co
to be inſnared in the Works of their o
Hands. It is true, the diſpoſure of Pro
dence to the honour of God, and for the
compliſhment of his Word, ought to be o
ſerved with Reverence, and *the Lord is kno*
by the Judgments which he executes †. Nev
theleſs, ſeeing the Diſtreſſes of the Wic
are juſt Puniſhments of their Sin, and do a
a great deal unto their Miſery, they are
theſe accounts the greater *Objects of Compaſſi*
ſo much the more inaccountable is the Wi
edneſs to take any, even the leaſt Comp
cency in their Miſeries. 3*d*, In a direct co
trariety to the fore-mentioned Maxim, wh
Prejudices and Alienations upon what
think provoking, do enter upon our Min
they are readily accompanyed more or l
with a Peremptorineſs, and ſuch as procur
an Averſion from laying them aſide (wh
we affect not) even upon juſt Information.

dan

* Pſal. 35. 12, 13, 14. † Pſ. 9. 16.

angerous and hurtful are these Prepossessions hich easily seize upon our wicked Minds, nd spread their Roots deep and far in them. o much for the 4*th Axiom*.

The 5*th* was this in summ, *viz. The Re-eations and Pleasantries of Life, ought all to be itable to the Rule, and should not interfere with, be hurtful unto, but ought upon the contrary to subservient to its serious Business.* See it *Mis-e* V. at more length, with the Exposition, orrolaries, and Consequences. I shall only present offer three plain Notes to found e Comparison. 1*st*, Reason it self saith, hat we may not make any Thing the Busi-ss of Life, which is not Subordinate to the onour of God, and suitable unto our Na-re and Dignity, as being reasonable Crea-res indued with immortal Souls, and who all have to do with a Deity for ever. 2*d*, s beyond doubt a lawful Calling is a good rt of the just Business of Life, so it should be anaged in a lawful Manner, and in such ays, as shall render it both worthy of a reature so dignified, and intirely subservient higher Ends. 3*d*, Nothing then can be puted justly and rationally Pleasant, unless be also truly † profitable, as one way or other serving the important Ends and Uses Life. All this is plain and clearly founded

† Mat. 12. 36.

on Reaſon. The Scriptures * alſo are ſo
and clear in the Matter, that I need
launch out into ſuch a ſpacious Sea. *He h*
ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what d
the Lord require of thee, &c. *What doth the L*
thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy G
to walk in his Ways, and to love him, &c. *T*
ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſhalt ſerve hi
&c. *Let every* † *Man wherein he is called there*
abide with God. I might inlarge to a gre
Extent in this Matter, did it admit of t
leaſt Debate, or were the Labour neceſſar
Let us rather compare the preſent State
Mankind with the Maxim in View, and wi
what I have juſt now repreſented as native
reſulting from it, and the following Partic
lars amongſt many others will appear as
qually clear and lamentable. 1*ſt*, I may a
peal to the Conſcience of any ſober Perſo
whether we really make that the great a
chief Buſineſs of Life, which the Honour
God, and the Dignity of rational and immo
tal Souls dwelling in Houſes of Clay do ſtron
ly demand. I acknowledge that ſome are
this Regard more excellent than their Neig
bours, yet the beſt will find Cauſe to be co
red with Bluſhes upon a ſerious and impart
Reflection. And on this occaſion I cannot b
regret with all due Reſpect to Perſons of D

ſtinct

* Mic. 6. 8. Deut. 10. 12. & 6. 13. Tit. 2. 11,
13. † 1 Cor. 7. 24.

tinction for Riches and Honour, that inſtead of improving the Advantages they enjoy from a more elevated Eſtate for the Glory of God, and the Benefit of Societies, many of them aſſume the greater Latitude in gratifying the *Vanity of their Minds*, and ſerving other Luſts in Ways, and unto Pitches which I love not to mention. It is manifeſt that the Occaſions our Sovereign Lord hath beſtowed upon them are great, and the Good they might do thro' Grace, by their Authority, Influence, and Example, is very conſiderable, much beyond what's attainable by others more meanly ſtated; yet how little theſe great Talents are improven, and how badly they are frequently uſed, is ſadly manifeſt to theſe, who lay Matters of that Kind to * Heart. I deſign not in the leaſt to excuſe or extenuate the Iniquities, and Unprofitableneſs of the lower Seize of People, but ſure their Influence, whether good or bad, is not ſo great nor extenſive; yet to the one and other, and chiefly to my own Soul, I muſt ſay, That a great deal of that which we make the Buſineſs of Life, and ſpend the Strength of it therein, cannot ſtand, when tryed, even at the Bar of Reaſon. And the Scriptural Character of ſuch a Conduct is highly Rational, namely, † *What Fruit had ye in theſe Things, whereof ye are now aſhamed, for the End of theſe Things is Death!* 2d, Touching what was

* Jer. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. † Rom. 6. 21.

was ſaid concerning the Management of a law
ful Calling in Ways ſubordinated, and ſubſe
vient unto the great End, and unto othe
Under-aims, becoming the Dignity of reaſon
able Creatures. It is plain that *Reaſon* claim
ſo much, and the Scriptures * are full and cle
in the Matter, *Whatſoever ye do* (ſaith th
Lord, ſpeaking of ſtational Duties) *do it heart
ly as to the Lord, and not unto Man. Whethe
ye Eat or Drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to t
Glory of God. Whatever ye do in Word, or
Deed, do it all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*
with a great deal more to the like purpoſ
which might be mentioned were it neceſſar
but I inlarge not. To proceed to the Com
pariſon; ſuch a Management would require
mongſt others, theſe following Particulars, 1
That a *conſcientious Reſpect* to the Appoint
ment of our ſovereign Lord and Law-give
ſhould be the *leading Principle* of our Motio
in the Sphere of a lawful Calling, and w
ought therein to have all the regards to
Deity, which the State and Regulation of re
ſonable Creatures to their Lord and Law-giv
do bear. 2*d*, That every Thing belongi
thereunto, be managed with ſuch *Veraci
Candor*, *Diſcretion*, and *Kindneſs* towards
thers, which our Hearts could warrantably d
ſire in our own Caſes. 3*d*, That in the whol
a juſt Reſpect be had to the Good of t

Co

* 1 Cor. 10, 31. Col. 3. 17. 23.

ommunity, and the Benefit of our Neighbours, ithout ſacrificing any valuable Intereſt to rivate and ſordid Gain, Pleaſure, and other uch baſe Ends and Uſes. This would open ~~the~~ Door to melancholy Diſcoveries of a Large d Eſtate of Matters, in the fore-mentioned, nd other the like Reſpects, but I think not he Labour will be needful, foraſmuch as the vils are too palpable, and the choiceſt Perons upon the Face of the Earth, are ſenſible of nany Things amiſs in their own Conduct, ith reference to the ſweet and clear Obliations which ly upon us all, from the Maxim. As to the 3*d Corrolary* or *Conſequence*, namely, *hat nothing can be reputed juſtly and rationally Pleaſant, unleſs it be alſo truly Profitable, as one ay or another*, ſerving the important Ends and Uſes of Life. I preſume no honeſt Man will queſtion the Obligation, and if we herewith ompare the many *ſenſual Pleaſures*, and other anifold *Vanities*, unto which our Minds are trongly addicted, the Contrariety of our Natures to indiſputable Duty in all this, will be bundantly manifeſt. So much for the 5*th Axiom*.

As to the 6*th* contained alſo in the 5*th Miſ-ſive*, and there explained at ſome Length, it mounts to this, *viz. No Conſiderations of any Perſon whatſoever afford real Ground to ſwerve in the leaſt from the Way of Duty.* Reaſon ſaith, There is no ſufficient Warrant here to ſupport uch Declinings, and therefore ſcarce any of the guilty,

guilty have the Impudence, or rather the I
genuity to profeſs the naked Truth, and
own their real Motives, while they act
wicked and moſt abject Part in *ſerving of Me*
but upon the contrary, they all pretend to a
honeſtly, and upon Grounds juſt and ſoli
The Scriptures * are alſo clear and plentiful
condemning this Servitude. *If I yet pleaſed Me*
I would not be the Servant of Chriſt. Ye a
bought with a Price, be not ye the Servants
Men. Fear not them that can kill the Body, &
The Teſtimony which the *Herodians* gave
the Lord Jeſus is very clear, and pointed
this Purpoſe, *viz. We know that thou art Tru*
and teacheſt the Way of God in Truth, neith
careſt thou for any Man, for thou regardeſt not
Perſons of Men. All Centers in this, *viz.* N
Conſideration of Men, however ſtated, nor
what we think will be either pleaſing or di
pleaſing to them, neither of that which w
may enjoy or ſuffer by them, ought to b
admitted to come in, as having a Share or a
fording ſome Part of the Ground upon whic
we determine the Matter of Right or Wron
This is plain from natural and ſcriptural Light
But how is the State of humane Nature pro
portioned hereunto? Aſſuredly the Proſpect
this affords are very heavy, as will appea
from a juſt Conſideration of two or three par
ticula

* Gal. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 7. 23. Mat. 10. 28. Act. 4. 19
Mat. 22. 16.

culars, which do clearly and natively result om the fore-mentioned Maxim. 1*st*. Were ur Deportment ſuitable to it, we would then Demean our ſelves in every Concernment of eligion, whether the Truths, Duties, or hatſoever elſe belongs thereunto, as if we ere preſently to appear before the righteous udge of all the Earth, when no Creature can rve us in ſtead one way or another. 2*d*, In is Event, all Men (however otherwiſe diinguiſhed) would be upon a Level with us s to theſe weighty Matters, Feud or Favour, enalties or Rewards, Poverty or Riches, eath or Life, would all be laid aſide, as not elonging to the Cauſe, nor furniſhing any juſt round for Determinations of whatſoever ort. We would then judge and act ſincerely, om an intire Reſpect unto the Rule, without being carried aſide by *extraneous Conſiderations*. 3*d*. Whereinſoever we might ſwerve as it is too preſumable we will) we would ſo ſtated) be very loath to *maintain our Ways*; ut upon the contrary, we would be ſincerely illing to bring them willing under an impartial Search, lying ſtill open to Conviction and nſtruction. All this is demonſtrable, by reaon at the Advantages which Revelation ffords, and without which we know very ittle of what's reaſonable, or unreaſonable in heſe Matters. As to Scripture, it is ſo full, n Accounts of this Nature, that I think it not neceſ-

neceſſary to trace them. Both Scripture a
Reaſon affirm, that it's *meet to be ſaid unto*
Lord † *what I know not teach thou me, and whe*
inſoever I have done Iniquity let me do ſo no mo
Here I might commence a lamentable Cond
ſcenſion upon many Things which ſadly a
evidently detect and demonſtrate a migh
Propenſion of our proud Natures, directly co
trary to the Maxim, and the immediate Co
ſequences of it, but the Matter of Fact is
evident, that it hath as many Witneſſes
there are Perſons upon the Face of the Earth
who all would give their Suffrage to what
have aſſerted, providing they dealt ſincere
Sure I am, that the choiceſt of Men, do kno
and lament the ſtrong Propenſions of Natu
in its preſent State, contrary unto the Maxi
and Branches thereof, which I have juſt no
mentioned. And therefore I add no more, bu
ſhall proceed to the next.

The *7th Axiom, Miſſive* V. was this in
Word, *Moral Evil is the worſt of Evils.* Vie
it explained there. I repeat not, only I mu
repreſent a particular or two reſulting from th
Maxim, that the Compariſon may be the mo
clear, and fair. Is *Moral Evil the worſt*
Evils? it clearly follows, or is included herei
1*ſt*, That it can make no Part of the *Happine*
of rational Creatures. The worſt of *Evils* ca
make no Man Happy; and hence it's contra
to

† Job. 34. 31, 32. Hag. 1. 5. Pſ. 4. 3. &c.

Reaſon, to look upon the moſt alluring En-
oyments as real Advantages, which are pur-
haſed at the rate of any Sin. The Price is
oo dear. 2*d*, Such Benefits, how much ſo
ver they may flatter, yet can afford no juſt
Ground for reaſonable Complacence. There's
Worm at the *Root* of ſuch *Gourds* how fair
oever their Flouriſhes may be. 3*d*, It is a plain,
nd in ſome Caſes a heroical Juncture for the
Exerciſe of true Virtue to refuſe the going the
eaſt of Lengths towards *Moral Evil*, whatſo-
ver Allurements and Proſpects of Advantage
nay offer to inforce ſuch Evils, and upon the
ontrary pleaſantly to chuſe, and to go reſo-
utely on in the Ways of Virtue, whatſoever
Hardſhips in circumſtanced Caſes, may ac-
ompany and follow them. Reaſon ſpeaks,
he *Axiom* carries all this, and the Scriptures
re all full of it. *Shall* * *I do this great Evil,*
nd Sin againſt God. It is memorable that
when *David* had politically adjuſted the whole
Buſineſs after his Guilt in the Matter of *Uriah*
nd *Bathſheba*, ſo that all was ſettled and co-
vered, *&c.* The Note, I ſay, which the Spi-
it of God puts upon the Conduct, is re-
markable, and awful, *viz.* *The Thing that* Da-
vid *did diſpleaſed* * *the Lord.* I take the
Strength of the firſt grand † Temptation to
have much conſiſted in this, *viz.* We were
there-

* Gen. 39. 9. † 2 Sam. 11. 27. * Gen. 3. 1. 23.
2 Cor. 11. 1, 2.

thereby deceived, and perſuaded to promi
Advantages to our ſelves, at the rate of Sin
and the Byaſs of Nature is ſtrong that way
ever ſince our original Defection. But to r
turn, we have many excellent Inſtances of th
truly noble Vertue recorded in the ſacre
Oracles, and exemplified in ſucceeding Age
I incline not to enter upon this Purpoſe, o
which you want not plenty of Accounts other
wiſe. *Moſes* * at once both abandoned *gre
and royal Pleaſures*, and alſo deliberately mad
choice of a Life accompanyed with *great Di
ficulties* and *Dangers*, meerly to avoid Sin, th
Impreſſion of which wrought in him a juſt De
teſtation and holy Contempt of theſe Pleaſure
I might eaſily inſtruct the contrary Propenſion
of our corrupt Natures unto all this, and migh
adduce, were it needful, a vaſt number of In
ſtances. No ingenuous and honeſt Man will dar
to aſſert that Nature in its preſent State, in
clineth to a *cloſe* and critical *Inquiry* into Righ
and Wrong, and carefully to ride the Marche
betwixt the one and the other, when the ſeve
ral Motives of the moſt extreme Danger, o
greateſt Advantages, do urge on either Hand
In Events of this Sort, our Wills and Inclina
tions are eaſily impoſed upon, bribed and by
aſſed. In which Caſes, our Underſtandings
act the Part of cunning *Advocates*, and are
full of Art in contriving, and adorning ſuch
ſpecious

* Heb. 11. 25, 26. and throughout.

ious Pretexts as generally pass current in World: Whereas the impartial Exami- are, by the reputed Wise, even by many e esteem'd devout Men, looked upon as rt of nice and scrupulous Fools, Humo- , the Disturbers of Mankind, and unfit ive in humane Society. So much for the om, I remain, &c.

LETTER IX.

erein the Nature of the forementioned Contra- iety is considered towards evincing the Neces- ity of a change of Nature for the removal hereof.

SIR,

THE preceeding Missive shewed that Na- ture in its present State is *contrary* unto t inconteſted *Morality* which I had a little ineated in the *Abstract*, and explained at e more Length in the *Axioms*. I now go to consider the Nature and Qualities of s Contrariety. And that I may remove bigu ities, and state the Matter fairly, I ceed in the following Method. 1*st*, I shall ch at some Lengths of a Sort of Conformity he Rule which hath been, and may be at- ned, without a removal of this Contra- y. 2*d*, I purpose to shew, that somewhat ch beyond all these Lengths is necessary for

a

a true removal thereof, and to make some p
ticular Condeſcendance on what's neceſſary
that Effect. 3*d*, All will iſſue into this, Th
our Natures muſt be changed for caſting th
(ſhall I ſo ſay) into the Mould of true *M*
rality.

As to the firſt of theſe, I repreſent the f
lowing Particulars. 1*ſt*, Notwithſtanding t
ſtrong Tendency of our Natures to all man
of Evil, yet they are under the *Reſtraints*
and *Checks* of ſovereign and merciful *Provide*
Every Imagination † *of the Thoughts of*
Hearts is only Evil continually. All who kn
themſelves can, and will bear Teſtimony
this ſad Truth, and were it not that the L
puts in ſome Bar, theſe Waters would fl
with a Current ſo violent, as would carry
before them. Humane Societies could n
ſtand, and Men, as Fiſhes of the Sea, wou
deſtroy on another. 2*d*, Such Reſtraints a
ſundry Degrees of a Sort of Conformity
the Rule are alſo procured, and influenced
inward Motives, ſuch as the * *Impulſes*
Conſcience informed to ſome Degree, and I
preſſions made thereupon by *remarkable W*
nings, and awful *Providences*, as alſo by t
proſpects of a ſolemn Account, and by oth
Means, which grave and worthy Autho
ha

* Pſ. 76. 10. & 65. 7. † Gen. 6. 5. & 8. 21. M
15. 19. * Rom. 2. 14, 15, 16. 17. 18. Deut
throughout.

ve particularly narrated, and want not to treated in this Manner. 3. Diverſe Mo- Virtues have been alſo practiſed, and ne have been much ſignalized on theſe ads, who yet had not the ineſteemable Bene- of revealed Light. And greater Attain- nts have had place at the Advantages of * velation, as I might particularly inſtruct, that practical Divines have done that at od Length. So much for the firſt Point.

Nevertheleſs, *2dly.* None of theſe or the like tainments remove this Contrariety of Na- e, which I evince by the following Con- erations. *1ſt.* They are not to be aſcribed any Sufficiency in Man, but are intirely ing to the divine Wiſdom, and Benignity, was juſt now obſerved. Hereof I offer this gle and deciſive Proof, namely, That the y beſt of Men, when left to the ſway of ir Natures, have ſo far given place to the cked Propenſions of the ſame, as to become Prey to Temptations, which have carried m to very great and dangerous Slips; a nifeſt and undoubted Evidence, that Na- e in the beſt of Men, being left to it ſelf, uld precipitate them to the moſt exorbitant ights of Wickedneſs, and that the choiceſt dowments of true and ſolid, yea and heroi- Virtue, would never ſtem that Tide, with-

G out

* 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3. Heb. 6. 4, 5. Mark 12. 32, 33. Mat. 19. 16, 17, 18, &c.

out a higher Influence. Instances of su
Hero's and their *Falls* we find in History, a
the Scriptures are † clear to this Effect. 2
As to the foresaid Conformities, I shall t
darken the judicious Observations of emin
Divines about them by any Resumption I co
make. They have largely demonstrated t
they come not up the length of removing t
Contrariety. Notwithstanding I offer a very f
Remarks, which, I think, may issue the Deb
1*st*. As little Rivolets keep their Waters, t
they disappear and become indiscernable, wh
a Multitude of them runs into some gr
River, and are therein swallowed up; so, s
Rivolets of vicious Inclinations may seem
be quite lost, when yet they continue in th
full Srrength, only they run into, and fol
the Course of some *Cardinal Vice*, which
a mighty River carrieth them alongst with
Current. Thus a Sort of refined Ambiti
takes off a great deal of Fuel from other L
for feeding its self, which otherwise would
liberally enough bestowed on these Lusts.
the mean while the Heart is not taken *
nor are the Inclinations, weaned even from
verse more sensual Lusts, as any ingenu
Person speaking his own Experience,
readily acknowledge. Only these more

† Gen. 9. 20, 21. 2 Sam. 11. 4. Mat. 26. 69,
Exod. 32. 1, 2, 3, 4. * 2 Cor. 7. 1. 1 Joh. 2.
1 Pet. 2. 11.

d Luſts cannot be gratified in this Event; regard they muſt give place to their Superi-, tho not without uneaſy Violences offered them. *2dly.* In this Situation of Matters, famed Moraliſt is but like a *painted* * *Se-lchre*, the out-ſide is indeed fair, yet within re is nothing but *dedd Bones, and Rottenneſs.* en have not occaſions for every Luſt at all nes, and yet theſe which ſleep for a while come to be ſerved in their Turn, but where re are no Conflicts there can be no Victory; d to be ſure it's no removal of this Contra-ty when meaner Luſts vail to theſe which greater, and truckle it under them for a me, yea tho' it ſhould be for altogether. *ly.* The more refined that Luſts be, they are ſtronger, like the Spirit of a Thing diſtilled d extracted, which are much ſtronger than aſt deal of the Subject from whence they re drawn out. Theſe more *poliſhed Vices*, ng as it were the *Spirit of Vice*, are truly the re vigorous: And tho' more groſs, and ſual Luſts, predomine not in this Caſe, yet ers which viſibly reign, are ſo much the onger, ſuch as deteſtable † *Pride, Envy, Ma-, Revenge*, and more ſuch of the Brood of ell, which alſo exceedingly reſemble their thor. Hence in all Ages it has been found, at the Conqueſts of ſuch Perſons unto the

* Mat. 23. 25. 27. † 1 Tim. 3. 6. Tit. 3. 3.

moſt beautiful Virtues, ſuch as *Bowels of Mercy, Kindneſs, humbleneſs of Mind, Meekne Long-ſuffering*, and the like; the Conqueſt, ſay, of ſuch Perſons to true and ſolid Virtu have been in all Ages the moſt difficult. O thers lay more open to convincing Mea whereas that luciferian Herd of proud Boaſte were almoſt intirely out of reach. This w be found clearly built upon Reaſon, foraſmu as, ſuch vain glorious Wretches are full of hi Self-conceits, and therefore intractable. T Scriptures are alſo clear in this Matter. T Scribes and Phariſees were the keeneſt En mies of Chriſt, as is known, and refined He theniſh Moraliſts were the moſt ingrained A verſaries of Chriſtianity, *when an evil Spirit turns to a Houſe ſweept* † *and garniſhed*, he fa not to bring in more Store. *4thly*, The gre Pretences and big Words, which ſundry of t more renowned Moraliſts uſed, whether the who were famed amongſt the Heathens, ſuch as did ſet up their Heads within t Church; their high Pretences, I ſay, we little more than *empty Sounds*, for the beſt them lived in the Practice of ſome *notour Vic* and became an eaſy Prey to more, when ſui able Temptations did caſt up. The Fact this Caſe has been abundantly cleared by A thors, who give us Accounts of the mo

fame

* Col. 3. 12, 13. Eph. 4. 31, 32. Mat. 11. 27.
† Luk. 11. 25, 26.

ed Moraliſts, which I need not repeat. have divine Authority interpoſed here. e *Scribes and Phariſees* covered ſundry, moſt *ccountable* * *Immoralities*, under their *religi-Vail.*

But to come more cloſely home to the main rpoſe, it will appear (which is the 3*d* Head) n a juſt View, that a change of Nature is eſſary for removing this Contrariety, if impartially weigh the following particu-

. The juſt Notions of a Deity bear, and Reaſon ſaith, That he who is the firſt ſe, and to whom we owe our *All*, ſhould be our ultimate End. The Glimmerings Nature improven in the Scriptures, evince uch, when duly pondered, and the Scrip- are full on the Head. He is the *Alpha* the *Omega* * *of him, and through him, and to are all Things.* This is a Maxim which ing but utter Profanity and Irreligion can radict. Our great Aim then, and Concern ife, and in all the Buſineſs thereof, ought a † *pleaſing God* in every thing, without Exception or Reſerve. 2*d*, It is firmly ected, and even inlaid herewith, that all Motions in whatſoever Station, ſhould be dinated and ſubſervient to this great and

Mat. 23. 14. † Rev. 1. 8. Rom. 11. 36. * Col. 1 Theſ. 2. 12. & 4. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 31. Col.

leading Aim, and of a Tendency that carr
them intirely that way. But as none of
former Lengths amount to this, being wh
calculated for the Meridian of *Self*, and
ing there; ſo the following particulars plai
and obviouſly contained in ſuch a Mould
Soul, will fully make out the Point. T
them in a very few Words. I refer the
largement to your riper Thoughts, for th
haſten to bring this Correſpondence to ſo
Iſſue. 1*ſt*, A placing our *Happineſs* in a D
intirely, and *only* *. Sure it is the *All* of rea
able Creatures to have Things rightly ſt
with them in this weighty Regard. 2*dly*
through Satisfaction with every Thing wh
our ſovereign Lord and Lawgiver hath dec
ed to be juſt and right, without intertai
the leaſt contrary Thought † or Inclinat
3*dly*, That the Stream of our Thoughts,
Affections, and the whole Strength of
and Body, which formerly was employe
ſerving diverſe Luſts and Pleaſures, that
theſe Motions, I ſay, do now change t
Sphere and Channel, and flow out towar
Deity as the *great and ultimate End*, with
ſweeter and ſtronger Current, than hereto
they did run the contrary Way. 4*thly*, Th
the moſt *afflicting Events*, a *Revelation of th*

* Pſal. 73. 24. Col. 3. 11. 1 Cor. 2. 1, 2. †
119, 128. Rom. 7. 22. Pro. 3. 17. &c. * Ro
19. Pſ. 27. 4. & 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2, 3.

e by Providence, be humbly and quietly ſub-
itted to, and the Declaration of the Will of a
vereign Lord intertained and acquieſced in *
th that Reverence and Obſervance which
its our Condition as ſinful Creatures, and
e anſwerable to the ſeveral Circumſtances
herein our ſovereign Lord hath placed us.
ſuredly a Converſation made up of the fore-
d, and the like Ingredients, is truly *rational*,
much alſo belongs to the caſting our Natures
o a Mould really *Moral*, and that this re-
ires a change of Nature, or of the ultimate
d, is, I would hope, ſo very evident, that I
ed not beſtow more Words upon it. I re-
ain, *&c.*

LETTER X.

ncludes the Correſpondence, by pointing at the the Neceſſity of revealed Religion.

SIR,

AFter all that I have hitherto repreſented, I think it is manifeſt, 1*ſt*, That it is ne-
ſſary we be delivered from this Contrariety our Natures to true Morality, both as to orſhip and Walk. 2*dly*, That it is utterly poſſible for us, either by our ſelves, or any Help

* Job. 1. 21. Pſ. 39. 9. 1 Sam. 3. 18. Iſa. 39. 8. Sam. 15. 25, 26.

Help, that Creatures can afford us, to remo
this *Contrariety*, and to bring up our So
into a Temper, truly Rational, and Moral. W
want both divine Revelation, and alſo t
Exertion of omnipotent Power, for that Effe
It is a greater Work to raiſe the Soul into th
Conformity, than that which at firſt gave us
Being. Here a vaſt Field opens for evinci
the *Neceſſity of Revelation.* The Topicks a
ſo full, clear, and numerous, that I need n
enter upon them. The whole of the Premiſ
directs unto them, and I intirely refer the ran
ing, to your Wiſdom and Direction. Neve
theleſs, I pretend not to demonſtrate the G
ſpel, or to give any Accounts thereof by th
Light of Reaſon. It ſhineth with ſuch Reſ
cence by its own Light, that the adducin
any other Proof would be much like to th
lighting a Candle, for deſcribing the Sun. Tha
the Lord will reſtore any of *Adam*'s loſt Race
and the Way wherein he doth, and will recov
them, theſe Things, I think, we owe purel
to *Revelation.* I know Men of Learning hav
advanced ſome Conſiderations Rational, an
Moral, from whence they projected to co
clude, that God will not ſuffer the whol
Race of Mankind to periſh in this their utte
ly degenerated and fallen Eſtate, and I migh
give Inſtances of the chief Topicks on which
they proceeded, but that I love not to repeat
For my Part, I coud never ſee any thing i
thes

ese Speculations beyond probable *Conjecture*. nd whatsoever they advanced on the Heads divine *Wisdom*, *Benignity* and *Mercy*, &c. a way of rational Deduction, might be ba- nced by the Consideration of the divine *Ju- ce*, and *Holiness*, the *Enormity of Sin*, and her such Topicks, which (for what I ow) could not be easily, if at all, refitted. hus by our empty and blinded Reasonings, e would but involve our selves into many a byrinth from whence I see not how any hreed of our weak and corrupt Reason, uld serve to lead us out. Let it suffice, that e whole Matter, being now set in clear Evi- nce, by revealed Light, every Thing belong- thereunto, howsoever *above Reason*, yet is rely and highly *reasonable*. That I may w issue these Missives into that which was iefly intended by them from the Beginning, presume (not to repeat the whole Series) t some few Things of Weight, are set in a in and convincing Evidence. I have en- voured to shew the *Enormity* of Nature in present State; yea, and its *Enmity* against *plain Notions of a Deity*. I have also detected some Measure, the vile and poysonous eams, which proceed from that dark and Source, and evinced that both Nature, the Scriptures declare, that *they who do things are worthy* * *of Death*. It hath been also

* Rom. 1. 32. Deut. 27. 26. Gal. 3. 10.

alſo evinced, that a *change of Nature* is nece
ſary, we muſt be made New, ſhall we be ca
into the Mould of *Maſculini*, true, and high
rational Morality. I need not again remin
you that we are all atrociouſly and hainouſ
Guilty, *we have ſinned and come ſhort* * *of t*
glory of God. We have offered the greateſt I
dignities to his glorious Majeſty, and there
fore are obnoxious to his pure and ſpotle
Juſtice, and the Honour of God is intereſte
the Majeſty, Juſtice and Holineſs, of the G
of Glory, do all demand *Reparation*, I inlarg
not. It's plain, and obvious, that we a
worthy of Death. What ſhall then *Attone* f
Evils, each of which is a Kind of *infinite Eno*
mity, as ſtricking againſt infinite Majeſty
Thouſands * *of Rams, and ten thouſands of R*
vers of Oyl, yea the Fruit of the Body, can nev
be a valuable Sacrifice. The whole *Univer*
tho made a *Burnt-offering*, could not amou
to an expiating the Guilt of any one of the
(in a ſort) infinite Evils, and far leſs of an i
numerable multitude of them. I pretend n
to deduce any, even the leaſt part of Goſp
Myſteries, from the weak and dark Taper
Nature, yet I am bold to ſay, That the litt
I have juſt now advanced concerning the Eno
mity of Sin, and the Majeſty, Juſtice and Ho
neſs of God, *&c.* is purely Rational, and
this is ſet in a bright and noble Evidence
ſcri

* Rom. 3. 23. † Mic. 6. 6, 7. Pſ. 50. 9, 10, 11,

ſcriptural Light. Sure Impreſſions of this, rivered upon an awakned Conſcience by a higher Power, would be of ſome Uſe, thro' the divine Bleſſing, to prepare the way for a grateful Reception of the high *Myſteries* of *Redemption*, which yet are intirely *the Object of Faith*. Moreover, a Senſe of our Impurities, together with the great ſtrength of Luſts, even ſuch Notices hereof as are deducible from Nature's Light, eſpecially as the ſame is fully declared in the Word, ſuch Impreſſions, I ſay, may be of good Uſe, clearly and fully to evince, that more is required for eſcaping out of that puddel, and breaking the *Iron Sinews* of manifold Rebellions againſt God, more I ſay is required than can be performable by all created Strength, and the Effects, are certainly above the reach of Creatures wholly drenched into, and inlaid with Sin. Thus the Way may be paved in ſome meaſure, for demonſtrating the abſolute Neceſſity of a *New Creation*, or the *New Birth*. And if we further conſider the ſtrong Byaſs which carrieth the beſt of Men with a mighty current out of the Road of Chriſtian Virtue, the Neceſſity of a continued Influence of omnipotent Power, Goodneſs, and Mercy, for preſerving and carrying on the Chriſtian in theſe Ways, will be manifeſt. Thus it appears that, *Goſpel Holineſs* derived from the *Lord Jeſus*, the only enlivening Head, is no ſtrange thing, and is moſt purely and highly

highly Rational, in regard all the Efforts of the choiceſt Men to wreſtle thorow the Crowds of contrary Luſts, and Temptations, do prove but vain and abortive, without a ſpecial guiding, ſtrengthning, and *determining Influence of the Spirit of God by the Word*, unto whom every good Thing is intirely and only owing. I fear, leaſt in this manner, I debaſe and diſparage the Myſteries of Religion by my poor Reaſonings; they are to be received meerly by Faith.

I ſhall juſt finiſh theſe Miſſives, after that I have repreſented, or reſumed a few Particulars, which have all the Evidence, Matter of Fact in this Kind, are capable of. *1ſt*, Nature's Glimmerings diſcover ſo much of Moral Beauty, as more than ſufficeth to render the Tranſgreſſors of what's plain, from thence utterly * *inexcuſeable*. *2dly*, The juſt Deductions from it at the Advantages of its Improvement by Revelation, go a great way further, and upon Grounds ſo clear, that they cannot be exepted againſt, unleſs we *abandon Reaſon, Conſcience, and all that's ſacred*. Theſe Detections are carried yet a greater † Length, when the *Law-giver*, himſelf unvails his own Laws, and carrieth them in upon the Conſcience, in their more full Meaning, and *vaſt Extent*. *3dly*, The Lord's *holding this Glaſs to the Eye*, diſcovers be-

* Rom. 1. 12. & 2. 14, 15. † Rom. 7. 8, 9, 10. Pſ. 119. 96.

eyond controul, the contradictory Croſeneſs of ur Natures to true Morality. 4*thly*, The ncereſt Endeavours, the greateſt and cloſeſt pplication, of the moſt ſerious and concern-d, cannot overcome this * Contrariety. Our truggles to wreſtle out of that Pit, engage us nore deeply into it. A *change of Nature*, a *enovation of the whole Man*, is of abſolute Neceſſity, for true, and Chriſtian Morality. thly, This Change cannot be produced by *Moral Swaſion*, nor can it be the Product of he ſtrongeſt Inforcements of the *Moral Law*. thly, It is only the Effect of a *deſtroying the ace of the* † *covering*, or a removal of the *Vail* om our Hearts by *inlightning of the Mind in he Knowledge of Chriſt*.

That this is a Method, tho' ſupernatural, et purely, and ſublimely Rational, I humbly hink the *intrinſical Beauty*, and *Glory* of the hing may ſhew, and will evince to theſe hoſe Eyes are not wholly ſhut. The Scriptures lſo declare the whole Matter at full Length: nd if our Adverſaries can be perſuaded to ave any regard to the Teſtimony of theſe, ho have found this Change of State in their wn Experience, all of them will ſet their Seal o that which I have advanced, without a ontrary Voice. If theſe Perſons can find no

Credit

* Jer. 13. 23. 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Ja. 3. 2. Heb. 5. 6. Iſ. 25. 7. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Joh. 3. 1, 2. &c. Jam. 1. 18, Cor. 5. 17. Act. 26. 18. Col. 1. 13. &c.

Credit, who, I am ſure, do beſt deſerve it any upon the Face of the Earth; I ſhall on ſay, it is the deſire of my Soul, that the Lo would perſuade, enable, and derermine o bittereſt Antagoniſts to come and ſee.

Thus I end my ſimple Remarks. No Pe ſon can be ſo ſenſible of the Weakneſs of thi and of all my Performances, than I my ſelf am Yet ſolid and weighty Truths have been ad vanced, and the Method is ſweet, tho' unpr cedented, for what I know. I am not with out Hope, but that this mean Eſſay ſhall en gage ſome one or more eminent Divines, t undertake the Work I have been aiming a and to manage it a great deal better. An tho' in that Event, this little Work ſhall b darkned, yet I will find Cauſe to rejoyce, tha God will be glorified; and ſome of our Adve ſaries, may, I hope, be gained; or, at leaſ have their Mouths by theſe Means, more e fectualy ſtopped. I remain, *&c.*

F I N I S.

MUSEUM

ERRATA.

PReface *Page* 5. *foot of the Page r.* Acts 26. Rom. 1. 18. Pr face *p.* 6. *at foot* dele 21. *p.* 3. *l.* 16. *r.* therefore. *p.* 18. 13. *&* *p.* 19. *l.* 1. *r.* endued. *p.* 20. *at foot r.* 1 Pet. 2. 17. *p.* 2 *l.* 17. *before* quiet *r.* a. *p.* 30. *l.* 1. *r.* a leſs part. *p.* 42. *l.* 17. 27. *r.* Deity. *ibid. l.* 23. *r.* Converſation. *ibid. l.* 29. *r.* demur *p.* 53. *l.* 5. *dele* ſome. *p.* 56. *l.* 14. *r.* diſpoſures. *p.* 16. *at f* Eccle. 7. 8, 9. *r.* 29. *p.* 99. *l.* 8. *r.* refelleth.